Charles N. Arnold

from his Grandfather

Oct 13th/59

(Purchased for the benefit of a blind girl.)

NATALIE;

OR,

A GEM AMONG THE SEA-WEEDS.

BY

FERNA VALE.

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TO THEE,

MY DARLING HATTIE,

I DEDICATE

The Sea-flower.

WOULD THAT THIS CASKET CONTAINED FOR SUCH AS THOU,
A PURER GEM.

*** ***

2051356

PREFACE.

In writing the following pages the author has spent pleasant hours, which perhaps might have been less profitably employed: if anything of interest be found among them, it is well,—and should any be led to take up their Cross in meekness and humility, searching out the path that leads the wanderer home, it is indeed well.

NATALIE.

CHAPTER I.

THE SEA-FLOWER.

"What was it that I loved so well about my childhood's home?
It was the wide and wave-lashed shore, the black rocks crowned
with foam!
It was the sea-gull's flapping wing, all trackless in its flight,
Its screaming note, that welcomed on the fierce and stormy night!
The wild heath had its flowers and moss, the forest had its trees,
Which, bending to the evening wind, made music in the breeze;
But earth, — ha! ha! I laugh e'en now, — earth had no charms
for me,
Nor scene half bright enough to win my young heart from the sea.
No! 't was the ocean, vast and deep, the fathomless, the free, —
The mighty rushing waters, that were ever dear to me!"

ELIZA COOK.

"But the goodly pearl which the merchant bought,
And for which his all he gave,
Was a purer pearl than will e'er be brought
From under the FOAMING wave." H. F. GOULD.

"MASSA Grobener! Massa Grobener! Please, sar, look here! De good Lord hab left his

mitest ob angels here on de beach; and please, sar, step low or de wee bit will take to its wings and fly away. De good Lord be praised! but old Bingo hab found many a bright sea-weed in his day, but dis am de sweetest sea-flower ob de whole."

And as he spoke, the little one stretched out its tiny arms toward the poor old black man and gave a faint moan. Captain Grosvenor, who had now come up with the negro, was no less surprised than had been old Vingo, at discovering, among the fresh, bright sea-weed, an infant some eight months old. The babe was carefully lashed into a large wooden trough or bowl, and a canvas firmly stretched over the top, permitting only the head and arms to remain exposed, and judging from the dripping condition of the worthy little sea-craft, it could not have been many moments since it had come to anchor on the smooth, hard beach; probably the now receding waves had borne the precious burden to this most welcome harbor — "whereby hangs a tale."

"De good Lord be praised, massa! but dis am de most curous ob all sea-ve'cles that eber trabers de great waters! I sure it must be a speint from

de great scripture ark massa read about in de good book; or may be it am one ob those old-time chariots, fiery chariots, we sings about; only it so moist around here, it put de fire all out and leabe de chariot. Or I tink it may be one ob dose machines Bingo used to see in old slabe-massa's church, hung up ober de minister's head, to make de good psalms or de prayers go de right way, and I do n't remember which; old Bingo always retained a bery bad memory, eber since before he was a child; but I tink dey used to call it a sound board, though it was full ob cracks."

Ah! poor fellow, had you seen that heart-rending look of despair, mingled with sweet resignation, upon the face of that mother! had you seen the glistening tear in the eye of that noble father, as, but a few hours before, they consigned their idolized child to the mercies of the deep; had you heard that prayer to God, if it might be his will, to spare their darling from an ocean-grave, your great heart would have been, if possible, kindled to a greater love for that helpless little one!

Captain Grosvenor, after having carefully taken the child from the grotesque looking craft, which

had proved so trustworthy a sailor, and wiped the drops of spray from its little face, wrapped it in a large bandana, and gave it to the faithful Vingo, while he took his glass and scanned the distant horizon; for well did he know, though even at noon-day, that one more unfortunate bark had gone down near that dread "Nantucket shoal," upon which so many noble hearts have found a watery grave. "I see nothing," said the Captain, "nothing, not even a passing sail; which is quite uncommon at this season, when so many vessels are constantly passing and repassing our island; not even the light-boat do I see, which is probably owing to a fog coming in from the sea, as yet imperceptible to us here. Poor fellows! I fear they have gone down without a soul to help them! It seems hard when there are so many stout hearts and ready arms here, willing to risk their lives in the attempt to save. Those shoals, Vingo, are the only unkind thing there is about our cherished island; but the will of God be done. Truly his ways are unsearchable."

"Den you tinks, massa, dis little sea-flower was left here trough mistake, by de Lord?"

"It most assuredly was left here by the Lord,

Vingo, but not by mistake. The fact is, my boy, there has been a wreck off to the east south-east of the island; probably some vessel has mistaken her bearings, or, being unacquainted with the coast, has run on to the shoals and gone to pieces; and this infant was made fast to the first floatable object that could be found, and with a mother's dying prayer for a rudder, and the hand of Him who guides us all at the helm, she has come to us here; and with eyes of heaven's own blue, she silently asks for that protection which shall not be withheld from her so long as it shall be within my power to give. And now, Vingo, boy, you may turn the horse's head for the town."

"Yes, massa."

And though some fifty years had passed over the old negro's head, he sprang with the agility of boyhood's days; although, as the poor fellow often remarked, "he had a wonderful constitution for enduring rest," the thought of his good missus's surprise, when she should learn of their morning's adventure, gave him new life, and he fairly danced about the beach for joy. Seated in the spring-cart, Captain Grosvenor took the babe in his arms, that had now fallen into a quiet sleep,

while Vingo, perching himself first on one foot and then the other, to keep his balance, gathered up the reins, and all started for home.

"I am tinking, massa, dat my missus be quite ober-much-come at de sight of dis little sea-flower."

"Yes, boy; yes, sea-flower indeed. I have travelled the wide world from stem to stern, but never have I met with such an emblem of innocence before." And though the hardy sea-captain had spent the greater part of his life among the whales, he stooped down and pressed his lips to the brow of the unconscious sleeper.

"Luff off there a little, Vingo; keep to the right; these bare commons are not the easiest grounds to ride over, though with a light spring-cart like this one can navigate with some degree of comfort. The broad ocean is the place, after all. Give me the old ship Tantalizer, and I am at home. Take the glass, Vingo, and see if you can make out whether the steamboat is in sight or not."

"Cannot eben make de staff, massa. Ah! now I sees him; de flag is up, old Massachusetts am in sight."

"She will be in early to-day. Travels decently fast, considering she is all out of joint. I hope we shall get a new steamer some day; then we may keep posted with what is going on in the outer world."

"Yes, massa, people tink we a piece ob de continent den."

An hour's ride brought our worthy captain to his own door, where stood Mrs. Grosvenor, with her son Harry, their only child, of seven years, awaiting him.

"You have made a long stay at the shore this morning, my husband; but if these little excursions will deter you from making a longer voyage, I will not complain."

"Yes, wife, yes; but for a peace offering I have brought to you a gem from among the sea-weeds."

"My dear husband, where can you have found this child?" and tears were in the eyes of the lady as she received the little unknown from his arms.

"Is it for you? to be yours, mother? Mother, may it stay with us here?" asked Harry; and in his delight he stumbled over old Neptune, who

was stretched at full length upon the floor, and the two went rolling over and over, first one up and then the other, till finally the boy came off victorious, seated astride the animal's back, who marched up to Mrs. Grosvenor's side, where they both remained, eyeing the little stranger in silence.

"The child's dress denotes no common birth," remarked the Captain, as his lady disrobed it of its rich lace dress, saturated with the salt sea-water. "And the gold bands; are there no marks?—nothing, by which we may gain the least clue of its history?"

"I see nothing; and it is well; for my heart already yearns towards the little creature, and in my selfish human nature, I can't but hope that we may be able to keep her for our own." And as she spoke she pressed the clasp of the band, and, behold! the miniature likeness of a lady was brought to view. The foster mother gazed upon those features, as if it were the face of an angel.

"I cannot have the heart to wish to retain *her* child! To deprive that mother of anything that can give her pain to lose. Would I could ask her to forgive my cruel thoughts; forgive the desire to retain this her gem. But I know she

has gone to her home in the skies; she was too pure for earth. Yes, this must be the mother, the child is so like her."

"The same features, the same expression; and," said the Captain, "I will use every means of finding out if there is one left of that ill-fated crew to tell the tale. It will probably be reported in a few days, if there are any missing vessels, either from our coasts or foreign ports. In the meantime I will take care to have this discovery registered at head-quarters, and then if we can discover no trace of her parentage we may have her for our own."

"Have her for our own! Nep, do you hear that? We are to have a new sister!" shouted the boy; and Nep, as if comprehending his young master's words, laid his great honest face on the feet of the child, and caressed her.

"Please, missus, do n't make little Sea-flower too fresh; she be pining for de sea;" remarked Vingo, as Mrs. Grosvenor proceeded to bathe the child in cool fresh water; and having brought out the baby-clothes worn by Harry, she was soon, by the aid of a little new milk, made comfortable, and, creeping down after old Nep, sat with her

hands buried in his shaggy coat, crowing with delight. The lights at Captain Grosvenor's burned long into the night of that eventful day, of the discovery of the Sea-flower, while he related to his wife how they had found the little one among the sea-weeds, and in forming plans for her future adoption, should nothing be learned of her parentage, and no friends come to claim the child.

Soon after the commencement of our story, a fearful storm swept the New England coast. 'T would seem as if the rage of the storm-king knew no bounds; and many hearts there were made desolate in that long-to-be-remembered September gale. Fragments of wrecks came ashore on different parts of the island, together with casks, chests, rigging, stoven boats, etc., which were picked up in various places, and by various characters. Some would watch eagerly for these trophies of destruction, and with grasping hand seize upon them, viewing the storm as sent for their own particular benefit; increasing their worldly goods, regardless of others' woes. While some there were, who turned away with a heart sick at the scene of devas-

tation, yet submissively bowing to His will, "who holds the waters in his hand." Wreck upon wreck was reported. The total loss of vessels from all parts of the world was very great, which only served to increase the mystery in regard to the unknown, which went down 'neath a calm noon-day sky. Days and months passed on, and still no tidings; till finally they came to look upon the loved one as their own.

The child grew in strength and beauty, and was a source of great amusement to them all. Old Vingo would delight to make one of his "squantums," as he called it, to the shore; and with master Harry, who was now taking his first lessons in driving, (a point once attained, boyhood thinks to gain no higher) and Sea-flower in his arms; with Nep, who is determined to be "head horse," bounding off in the distance, is happiness enough for the negro, and his white teeth glisten in the bright sunshine like so many African pearls, as he jabbers away to Sea-flower, as if she were comprehending the whole. But 't was enough for Vingo, that she in reply to his half hour's remarks, would put out her hand toward

the blue waters, and with eyes dilated with wonderment, would say, "Tee! Indo, Tee!"

There on the beach they would have a fine race with the surf, Vingo following with the child the receding wave, and then, as it came in with a roar from the sea, he would run as if pursued by a foe, sometimes the spray dashing up all around them, much to the joy of the Sea-flower, her merry laugh according strangely with the music of the waters. Harry amused himself for a while, throwing the bits of drift-wood into the water, that he might see old Newfoundland dash in and combat with the waves, to secure the prize, which he never failed to do; but wearying of this, he came and took his seat by the side of his sister, and commenced whittling diligently on an old piece of plank.

"Vingo, do you think my father will ever go to sea again?"

"I don't know, young massa; but why you tink ob dat?"

"O, I have often thought I would like to go with my father away over the great ocean. I long to see more of the world; and I often think of the time when I shall be a man, and have a

ship of my own. I never hear of a ship arrived at the bar, but it sends a thrill of delight over me, and I watch the sailors as they come on shore after a three years' voyage, and think how happy they must be, though they look as if they had met with the rubbers. O, I know I shall be a sailor boy! there is something noble about the very name."

"Missus be berry sorry to hear you talk so," said Vingo.

"I know my mother would be very sorry to have me go to sea, for I remember how sad she looked for many days after father went away, though I was but a little boy. And I remember my father took me in his arms, and told me I must be a good boy, and take care of mother until he came back. But now you would be here, Vingo, to see that my mother knew no want."

"Yes, de good Lord be praised for sending good massa Grobener to take me away from old slabe massa. I gets so filled wid liberty sometimes, dat I mistakes myself for white man."

"Well, you are as good as a white man, any day; but tell me, Vingo, if you have ever been much on the water?"

"Not a great deal; I used to take old massa wid his children out for a sail sometimes, and den I hab a slight recollection ob being brought from a great way off; but dat must hab been before I come to be berry great. De pleasantest sail I eber take was when I leabe old Berginny in de good Tantalizer; and I swings my hat at old slabe massa on de bank, and asks him if he do n't wish he as free as dis individual. Dat was but a few years ago; den you wear little dress like Sea-flower, and now you talk 'bout going to sea! Well, dat am de way wid you sea-fish here."

As the three sat on the beach, enjoying the morning breeze, Harry observed a gentleman not far off, who appeared to be taking sketches of the scenery around, and occasionally would give a glance towards where our little party were sitting, somewhat to the disquietude of Nep, who came and stood sentinel, as much as to say, "I will protect you;" but finding the stranger disposed to do them no harm, he composed himself for a nap. The whittling process being now finished, Harry produced what he termed a "two-master," the which, Vingo declared it would be no sin to worship, as it was not in the likeness of anything.

"She is not a very polished looking craft, to be sure, but I know she is a sailer, for all that. At any rate, she shall be of some service;" and he seized old Nep by the ear, and making fast his dogship to the little ark, he carefully seated the Sea-flower at the helm, and with Vingo's rainbow bandana flying from the mast-head, they were soon under full headway. Either Nep being proud of his charge, or the little one mistaking the thoughtful face, lit up with the glow of enthusiasm, of the stranger, for a beacon light; they came up with him, who called to Harry to join them.

"What is your name, my son?"

"Harry Grosvenor, sir," answered the boy, drawing himself up to his full height.

"And what have you here?" added he. "I suppose you came along as supercargo; pray tell me with what are you freighted?"

"The Sea-flower is my only freight, sir."

"And God grant that you may always find as valuable! but tell me, is this angelic child your sister?"

"Yes, sir, my sister, and we all love her very much; we could not be without her, for we might

forget to thank our Father for his kindness to us, if we had no Sea-flower to remind us of Heaven."

"So young, and can appreciate so rare a gift," mused the gentleman; "childhood, indeed, is the first to discover purity;" and the eye of the stranger grew moist, and the melancholy smile which sat upon his countenance gave place to the shadows of grief. "What is the child's name?" asked he.

"We call her Sea-flower, sir."

"'Tis a peculiar, sweet name; but has she no other?"

"We have always called her by that name. Mother says she came to us from God, and he loves the little flowers; he smiles upon each one, as it holds up its little head, all shining with pearly tears wept by the stars. But do you not love my sister? I did not think she could make you sad."

"Yes, yes, my son; take good care of her, be a true brother to her, ever. Many long years have passed since my own little Natalie played in my arms, but they are gone;" and the kind gentleman gathered his sketching instruments to depart.

That night, as Mrs. Grosvenor talked with her children, as was her wont, of the good Father

who loves us all, Harry related the interview with the stranger gentleman; and in the prayer which followed he was not forgotten. The Sea-flower folded her tiny hands meekly, while from the windows of her soul went up the love she could not speak. As that faithful mother sat meditating upon the story of Harry in regard to the stranger, which she had related to her husband, Captain Grosvenor remarked, — "It is just one year to-day when our dear child came to us, being also my birthday; but instead of adding a year to my life, it seems to me old Father time has made a mistake, and made a deduction of a year. Just one year to-day, and she is the Sea-flower still. Yes, she will ever be the Sea-flower to us; yet I suppose she must have a name more in keeping with the ideas of the world. What was the name of the lost one the sad gentleman mused of?"

"He spoke of the long time ago, before his own Natalie had gone."

"Poor man! Each life must have its portion of bitterness. Natalie, — I like the sound; it reminds me of my home on the waters. With your consent, my wife, the christian name of the child shall be Natalie, for she came to us from the sea.

CHAPTER II.

THE ISLAND HOME.

"Long may this ocean-gem be bright,
And long may it be fair,
In Freedom's pure and blessed light,
And Virtue's hallowed air!
While still across its ocean bound,
Shall e'er be borne the truthful sound,
Our island home! our island home!
We love our island home!"

MRS. J. H. HANAFORD.

"And yet that isle remaineth,
A refuge for the free,
As when true-hearted Macy
Beheld it from the sea.
God bless the sea-beat island!
And grant for evermore,
That Charity and Freedom dwell,
As now, upon the shore!"

J. G. WHITTIER.

GENTLE reader, pause a little, and let us for a few moments turn our thoughts toward that

Island of the sea, upon which it was the fate of our heroine, through the guidance of a divine providence, to find a home in the bosoms of those whose hearts' beatings were of love for our unknown. Yea, love ever encircleth purity.

Properly, this chapter, descriptive of the Island of Nantucket, should have been our first; but had that been the case, alas, for the simple tale of Natalie! How many would have passed it by with but one thought, and that thought invariably, — Nantucket! pooh! a fish story, strikingly embellished with ignorance. And you may indeed discover in the feebleness of my unpretending pen, much that is food for critics; yet give not a thought of ridicule to Nantucket's favored ones, for it is not for me to enlist under her banner of superiority of intellect. To the many questions which I know you have it in your heart to ask, as touching the civilization, etc., of these islanders, I do not reply, as I might be tempted under other circumstances to do, that it would be advisable to procure a passport before landing on those shores, lest one might stand in danger of being harpooned by the natives; but rather let me, in as correct a light as I may, set forth to

those who have heretofore known but little of those who inhabit that triangular bit of land in the wide ocean, which, when we were six year olds, we passed over on our maps with the thought, I wonder if they have Sundays there.

Situated nearly one hundred miles, in a south-easterly course from the city of Boston, and about thirty miles from the nearest point of main land, Nantucket lifts her proud head from out the broad Atlantic, whose waters, even when lashed to madness, have been kind to her. And now, on this oppressive July morning, let us throw aside our cares, and come out from our daily round of duties, where we have been scaling with our eyes the tall brick barriers which shut out God's beautiful blue sky and sunshine. Yes, let us off, anywhere, to get one glimpse of Nature. On board the good steamer "Island Home," a two hours' sail carries us over that distance which separates Cape Cod from Nantucket. If you have not passed most of your days among the Connecticut hills, you pay little attention to that "green-eyed monster," who considers it a part of his duty to prepare the uninitiated for the good time coming. Arrived at the bar, which stretches itself

across the entrance to the harbor, our first impressions take to themselves the forms of sundry venerable windmills, church spires and towers, representing various orders of architecture; but that which strikes us most is the scarcity of shipping, not more than a dozen vessels lying at the wharves. In former times Nantucket numbered as many whaleships belonging to her port, as did any town on our seaboard. Indeed, she was built up from the produce of the ocean, and carried the palm for years as being first among the American whale fisheries; but her number has dwindled away, till not one-fourth of those homeward-bound ships are destined for the port of Nantucket.

The town, we find, is situated on the northern shore of the island, at the harbor's head. The houses are compact, and most of them built of wood, with little regard to beauty; though some few residences there are, of modern style, which do credit to their designers; but the greater number speak only of antiquity, with their shingled sides; and you will rarely see a house that has not a "walk" upon its roof, with which they could by no means dispense, as in case of ship-

wreck near the island, the roofs of the whole town will be alive with men, women, and children, spy-glass in hand. Besides the town there are but one or two small villages, "Polpis," and the far-famed "Siaconset," or "Sconset," as it is usually termed, — numbering some four dozen houses. This village is seven and one-half miles from the town, affording a delightful place of recreation for families from town, who, as the summer holidays come round, harness up old Dobbin, and prepare for a six weeks' "siesta." If, by reason of the great financial pressure, you find you have not sufficient pocket-money to take you for a short tour to Europe, come to "Sconset;" it is a glorious place! take a stroll along that grand old beach, and watch the moon rise from out the ocean; then go to your comfortable seven-by-nine lodgings, which seems like a palace, draw the comfortable rug about you, and fall asleep, with old Ocean for a lullaby, to dream (if your waking hours are fortunately of that bent) of some old deserted castle, "Salem witchcraft," or a lone "Grace Pool," attendant within the attic's most remote recesses.

The face of the island is level, so much so that the flat, bare commons resemble somewhat our

western prairies; and with the exception of the cliffs at the north, and Sancoty Head, there are but few slight elevations. Owing to the peculiar shape of the island, its two arms stretching far out on either side, it does not appear to be as large as it really is, — being about sixteen miles long, and four wide, affording sufficient elbow room, however, for its eight thousand inhabitants. The soil is sandy, but is cultivated to some extent; and though they can boast of no extensive forests, yet you may occasionally meet with an old friend in the way of a noble elm, or the pensive weeping willow. The culture of fruit trees, also, is receiving much attention of later years, and as widely as refinement must be separated from the islanders, to be in keeping with your views, their love for the sweet spring flowers knows no bounds.

In your walks of curiosity about town, you meet with a great many of the denomination termed Friends, or Quakers, and as you pass them you cannot refrain from giving them the inside walk, for their very garb is of humility; and as you look into the placid face of some matron, you feel like uncovering yourself, for you can see the

innocence looking out of her eyes. You are curious to know whither so many are wending their way, and meeting a sailor-boy, he tells you it is "fifth day," and if you follow in the wake of the "slick bonnets," they will pilot you to their nearest light-house; but precious little light you will get unless the spirit move some of them to pick up the wick. You move on with the rest till you come to their house of worship, which appears as humble as those who enter its doors. As you contrast the plainness on all sides with the richly decorated edifice in which you have been accustomed to worship, you try to smile a smile of contempt at the scene, but cannot, for you feel that the spirit of Christ is in their midst; and though not a word is spoken during the hour and a half, yet you feel that the silent worship which went up to Heaven, was heard by Him who answers prayer. As a signal for dispersing, the elders who occupy the "rising seats," arise and shake hands, and you go your way with those silent ones, feeling that their worship was acceptable to God. The Quakers of Nantucket are rapidly diminishing in number. Formerly two-thirds, perhaps, of the population, were of the Society of Friends,

but now not one-third are of that denomination. As their children come up, they are not true to the faith, as were their fathers, and they put off the plain garb for the fashions of the day. A Quaker in Nantucket will in time come to be a great curiosity. Their places will, we fear, be filled by none more upright. Heaven bless them!

Nantucket of the present is not Nantucket of the past. Her quaint, old-timeness has given place to customs and manners more in accordance with things common-place. Yet her originality has not entirely forsaken her; she has a character even now, peculiar to herself. The wild waves come tumbling in, their glad shouts ringing through the midnight stillness with the same zest as of yore; and the same starry skies, which looked down on the fair maiden of a century ago, still bend over her children's children, as they tread along life's rugged way. Occasionally you may meet with one who has long since passed the meridian of life, one, perhaps, who has never been off of the island of his birth; and he will tell you of the Nantucket of the past, before her peaceful shores had been invaded by the stranger; when they might lay them down to

sleep, without thought of bolt or bar, save old ocean's faithful bands. You will learn of Nantucket from the beginning down to the present time. Then the island was big with prosperity. Her sons were not obliged to leave their homes for a five years' voyage, in search of the monster from which they gained their chief maintenance, for there were then good fishing grounds near the shore, and often the whale might be seen from their little island, spouting off in the distance; and their ships came proudly bearing down to the bar, laden heavily with the good sperm oil, and all hearts were made lighter and each purse heavier, with every new arrival of good fortune; as if they had been one great family, each one smiling on another's prosperity. "But now,"—and the face of the narrator is less joyous as he turns from *then* to *now*,—"things are not what they were. Our island is becoming like what they tell me the world at large is." And the old man will re-light his pipe, and with a sad smile he will give you the names of his ancestors, from his great "Grand-'ther" down to more modern times, when his fifth cousin Obed was a large ship-owner. Ah! treat such of other days with kindness, for the style of

that day will never come again; their great hearts of brotherly love are not of this generation, yet they have left an impress upon those well-loved shores that can never be entirely erased. Those foot-prints of long ago, combined with the peculiarities which will ever dwell with these children of the sea, are attractions which insure to the stranger on his first visit, visions of many a happy hour in the future; and he will long for the season to return which shall liberate so many of the city doomed artificials to a few weeks' intercourse with nature.

Awakened at early dawn by the sailor's merry "yo, ho," coming up from the waters with the sun, you turn your eyes seaward, and what a glorious sight is before you! As far as the eye can reach, water, blue, rolling water, tinged with rising sunlight in its morning purity; the night-bird folds her wings, which she has laved in the white sea-foam, softening the sigh of the breakers to the ear of those who slumbered; the white sails bow their heads, while the old tars wonder what makes them so happy. With these pleasant sunrise impressions you go forth into the day with more lenient views towards the "land of whales," sniffing the salt air with a real gusto.

Glancing up the street, you descry an object in the distance which much resembles a travelling dry-goods merchant, with the many fancy streamers flying in the breeze; but as it draws nearer, you look around in astonishment for "Barnum," fully persuaded if that worthy is not on the ground, he has mistaken his calling for once. The object in question is no less than a common two-wheeled horse-cart, such as are used to do our heavy carting, except this is on springs, and of a lighter build; in the vehicle are some half dozen ladies, standing, their only support being short ropes attached to the sides, which, however, are seldom used, except by those unaccustomed to this kind of exercise, and in this position they ride with the greatest ease, seldom losing their balance, even when going at full speed.

Thoroughly initiated, and having seen most of the lions of the place, you find yourself becoming more and more attached, forget that you have ever thought of the island as anything but attractive. Your one week has become the length of four, and the letters to anxious friends at home have been characteristic of briefness, unwilling to steal a moment's time from the enjoyment which

will furnish a topic for the unemployed hours of longer days to come. Of the many excursions which have made short the hours of your sojourn here, I will not enter into detail; suffice it to say, you have been disappointed in Nantucket and its inhabitants. You have made many firm friends, the memory of whom will stir the tear of unselfish love, as you number them over, one by one, in the future. They will never be forgotten. You have found Nantucket is not merely an isolated place, where oil is manufactured; where the people only work to eat, and eat to work. [Though as some have suggested, a carriage drive connecting Nantucket with the Continent would be a great modern improvement]. As one has quaintly expressed, in a little poem entitled "An Old Story:"

"Before Columbus ever thought
Of Western World, with glory fraught;
Before the Northmen had been known
To wander from their native zone;
Before war raised a single mound,
The antiquarians to confound;
Indeed, so very long ago,
The time one can't exactly know,—
A giant Sachem, good as great,

Reigned in and over our Bay State.
So huge was he, his realm so small,
He could not exercise at all,
Except by taking to the sea.
[For which he had a ticket free,
Granted by Neptune, with the seal,
A salient clam, and couchant eel].
His pipe was many a mile in length,
His lungs proportionable in strength;
And his rich moccasins, — with the pair,
The seven-league boots would not compare.
Whene'er siestas he would take,
Cape Cod must help his couch to make;
And, being lowly, it was meet
He should prefer it for his feet.
Well, one day, after quite a doze,
A month or two in length, suppose,
He waked, and, as he 'd often done,
Strolled forth to see the mid-day sun;
But while unconsciously he slept,
The sand within his moccasins crept;
At every step some pain he'd feel,
'T was now the toe, now near the heel;
At length his Sachemship grew cross,
The pebbles to the sea he 'd toss,
And with a moccasin in each hand,
He threw on either side the sand;
Then in an instant there appear
Two little isles, the Sachem near!
One as the Vineyard now is known,
The other we may call our own.

At ease, he freely breathed awhile,
Which sent the fogs to bless our isle;
And turning East, with quickened motion,
The chill, bleak winds came o'er the ocean.

Ill-judging Sachem! would that you
Had never shaken *here* that shoe.
Or, having done so, would again,
And join Nantucket to the main!"

Having had a peep within the nest, you sigh for the return of the bird, and we will on.

CHAPTER III.

THE VOICE OF CHILDHOOD.

"Ah! Well may sages bow to thee,
Dear, loving, guileless Infancy!
And sigh beside their lofty lore
For one untaught delight of thine;
And feel they 'd give their learning's store,
To know again thy truth divine."

MRS. OSGOOD.

"And now behold him kneeling there,
By the child's side, in humble prayer;
While the same sun-beam shines upon
The guilty and the guiltless one;
And hymns of joy proclaim through heaven,
The triumph of a soul forgiven."

MOORE'S "LALLA ROOKH."

"MOTHER, why does every one pass poor old Quady by without giving him even a smile? Is not that the reason why he looks so sorrowful? He looked so sad when I met him this afternoon, that I

could not help holding out the daisies which I had gathered for you, towards him; and when he did not take them, but stood looking at me without speaking a word, I asked him if he did not want the flowers to carry to his home, and put them into his hand; and when I had come up with the school-girls, who had run away when they saw him coming, I looked after him, and he was still standing by the road-side, with the flowers in his hand, watching us as we went up the street. Perhaps he was resting a little, for it is a long way to the low home over the commons."

"Quady, my dear, no doubt feels that he is alone in the world, for he is the only one that is left of a large tribe of Indians; all of his kind are gone, and are buried, no one but himself knows where. He does not look upon the pale faces as brothers, though they treat him kindly. He feels that wrong has been shown his ancestors at their hands. I am glad, my child, that you were kind to the Indian."

"Yes, mother, I love everybody; but I think I love those best who look as if no one cared for them. I suppose everybody loves poor Quady, only they forget to let him know it."

"You like dat old Ingin, Sea-flower? why, he almost as black as Bingo hesef."

"Do you think I do not love you, Vingo, because you are black? You are always good to me, and what would I do without you to take me to the shore, whenever I like to go?"

"O, little missy, I tink you can sympetize wid old black Bingo; but den, ebry body not like you; you's one ob de Lord's chilen hesef."

"We are all the Lord's children, Vingo," said Mrs. Grosvenor; "and we should walk in the paths of righteousness, that we may be worthy of his name. You may go, now."

"What does Vingo mean, mother? he talks so strangely sometimes about my being left here by the Lord, and goes on muttering something to himself, which I cannot understand, and laughs as if he was very happy."

"It is his way of expressing himself, my dear; the negroes are a peculiar race."

"Yes, I think they are; I like their ways, they are always so kind. Are not their dispositions better than those of some white people? I never heard of a black man being cruel to any one, but I have seen the prints of a whip-lash on Vingo's

neck, where he said his old massa used to whip him; and I asked him many times over, if he was sure it was a white man who whipped him, and he said yes, he was sure, for he remembers he used to wish white folks were black, so they could not tell which were the negroes."

"There are some very hard-hearted people in the world. Vingo was brought up in slavery; when you are a little older you will understand it better."

"Dear mother, you know what is best for me; but often, when I am interested in what is said, and ask questions, people tell me I will understand it when I am a little older; and when I sit down by myself, and they think I have forgotten all about it, I find myself wishing I was "a little older," for it disappoints me so much to leave a story not finished."

Mrs. Grosvenor looked at the child in silence.

"I have not displeased you, dear mother, have I? I did not feel that I was saying anything wrong."

"No, darling; I did not think you would understand me, that was the reason why I did not explain to you. I am always ready to talk with you, if you can comprehend what I am saying."

"Never mind, mother, I am six years old; it won't be a great while before I shall be 'a little older,' and then I can realize how very good you are to me, my dear mother, and how patient you are."

Mrs. Grosvenor clasped the child in her arms. * * * * * "What makes little pet look so sober to-night?" asked Captain Grosvenor, as taking her on his knee, he pushed the dark brown curls from off her forehead, and looked into her mild, blue eyes. "What makes Sea-flower so quiet? Has anything happened to either of your seven kittens? or has some flower which has lived already a week longer than nature designed, at last withered, and gone the way of all frailties?"

"O, father, I should be very wicked if I were not happy, when I have so much to make me so; but sometimes, when I hear the shore roaring so loud as it does this evening, and look up at the stars, as they twinkle in their homes far away in the sky, there is something which comes over me of sadness, making me a great deal happier; and there is one particular star which I always notice, for it seems as if it was looking down at me so gently, that I forget myself, and put out my hand

to touch it, as if it was not so far away; and I fancy sometimes that the star can read my thoughts, for it seems to smile when I am happiest."

"You are a little fanciful creature; you must learn to leave off dreaming when you are awake."

"What shall you dream about when father goes away to sea again?" asked Harry.

"I think mother will not let him go; we cannot spare him; but if you should go, father, I shall love to dream of you very often; I will think of you every day, sailing on the water with a heart so light. O, it must be so pleasant to live, to sleep on the water! And you will want to see dear mother and Harry, when you are so far away; you will not forget us;" and she hid her cheek in the hardy captain's bosom.

"No, no, darling, I shan't forget you; but we wont talk any more about it now; I have not gone yet."

What was it made that stout man's voice tremulous, as he called for his evening paper? Many a time had that stern voice been heard above the hurricane's roar, giving the word of command,—why did it tremble now? Was

it that voice of childhood which sank into his heart?

* * * * * * * * * *

"Missus, de sun hab done gone, now, de chilens hab all gone from school long ago, and Bingo's two eyes hab clean gone stretched, looking up de road for de Sea-flower," remarked that worthy, putting his ebony head in at the drawing-room door, where sat Mrs. Grosvenor, so busily engaged making those garments for her husband, which she feared would be needed, alas! so soon that she had not perceived the hours were gliding on apace, and that it was long past the time when Sea-flower usually came tripping in from school to receive her evening kiss, and to tell over the events of the day.

"Has Harry come home yet? she may have gone up to the High School to meet him."

"Yes, missus, massa Harry here a long time."

"Then you had better go and see what keeps her; you will probably meet her on the way, and if it is not too late you may take the horse and give her a ride."

"Yes, missus;" and the jet pony, so many shades lighter than his driver, was soon lost in the distance.

The last faint shadows of the sun had died away, the moon had risen in all her queenly beauty, and Vingo had not returned; neither had anything been seen of the Sea-flower since she had left home early in the afternoon; and now Mrs. Grosvenor really began to feel anxious, as she stood looking out into the night; for, although the child was accustomed to stroll about the fields in search of wild flowers, whenever she liked, she had never before stayed away so long.

"Husband, had you not better go and see what has become of her? I cannot think what keeps them."

"It is a mystery; but give yourself no uneasiness; I 'll be bound the child has made a safe harbor somewhere. She usually has a look-out aloft."

"Ah! there they come, under a full press of sail!" cried Harry, who loved well to imitate the nautical phrases of his father. "Does she not make a grand figure-head!".

"Figure-head!" exclaimed Vingo; "I am tinking, young massa, if dis 'ere head ob mine had not been made so solid like, 'spressly for figuring, dat it been a powerful time afore you cotch sight.

ob dis bit ob fly-away again. De good Lord be praised! but if I do n't tink little missy so filled wid what de angels libs on dat she make use ob de shadow ob dar wings to take herself away ober dose yar commons! It make me smile to tink how dat old Ingin look at Sea-flower, as if de sun was puttin' out his eyes."

"Why, my child, you surely have not been out to Quady's hut! it is a long way."

"Ha! a fast sailor, always has a fair breeze; dropped anchor in the best harbor in these parts! But what's this? colors half-mast?" exclaimed the captain, as he caught sight of a little pouch, woven together of bright colored basket stuff, slung over her shoulder; a little drab paw, darting from out its deepest recesses in pursuit of a tantalizing curl, soon explains how matters stand, and a voice of the greatest feline sweetness is heard in reply to divers catlike salutations, proceeding from the adjoining apartment.

"This is my wallet, which Quady has made for me to carry my kittens in; and pussy has enjoyed it so much! 'Tis the way Quady's people used to carry their babies through these very streets, only there were prettier walks here then. O, he has told me so many pretty stories!"

"How came you to have your kitten with you? and why did you go away so far, and stay so late, my dear? I have been looking for you a long time."

"O, mother, I will tell you all about it. As I was bidding my kittens good-bye, after having a little talk with them, as I usually do before going to school, I missed one of the smallest, which I call Charity, because she always looks up at the larger ones, when they play with her too roughly, in such a forgiving way. I looked all around, and not finding her, thought she must have strayed away by herself, and I ran off to school. Our lesson for to-day was Faith, Hope, and Charity; as I read the last word I looked down, and there was my own Charity peeping at me from out my pocket. I explained to my teacher how it happened, for I thought she would be displeased; but having an errand into the next room just then, she did not think of kitten, who lay quietly sleeping again; and when I had said all my lessons, my teacher excused me, saying it was because I had been a good girl. And so we strolled over the commons together, Charity and I, and I dressed her in wild flowers, and she did look so

innocent! On we went, I running after kitten, and then kitten after me, when, before I thought how far we had come, I espied Quady's low home a little way off, and he was sitting at the door. He did not see me until I stood before him, and then he went into his house and brought out a large pipe and gave to me; I thought it so strange that poor Quady should think a little girl could smoke a pipe, but I took it to please him, and then he showed me so many curious things; there was a large bow, and arrows with sharp bits of iron in their heads, and he was going to shoot a little sparrow which sat upon the fence, but I caught his arm, and begged him not to kill the poor thing. I told him God made the sparrow to be happy, and he asked me if I meant the Great Spirit, if my God was his God? When I told him it was, he put up his bow and came and sat down by me, and taking a little paper from his bosom, unrolled it, and there were the daisies which I had given him so long ago! He asked if the Great Spirit made them, too, and if he had sent me to give them to him; and when I told him the great Spirit made all the flowers, made everything, and loved everybody who

loved him, and that he would let his children all come home and live with him by-and-by, the tears rolled down his cheeks, and he said, — 'O! me see my brothers, then! me not be all alone! Me love Great Spirit; Great Spirit so good to send little white-face to tell me how to get home.' Then I could not help crying myself, mother, for I thought I should like to meet Quady's brothers there."

"Ah! bress de Lord, but it am good as a small bible to hear dat chile talk;" was heard in a suppressed voice, as it went stable-ward.

Day after day passed, and that little one was often seen, attended by old Nep, or in the arms of the faithful Vingo, on her way to the low home over the commons, much to the horror of sensitive mothers, who shook their heads and said, "she is a strange child." Never was Sea-flower happier than when she might be allowed to go and see the Indian; and it was indeed a strange sight to see that red man, the only representative of a departed tribe, gazing upon the little one, as she talked to him of Jesus and his word.

The autumn of the year had come. It was one of those soul-stirring days in October, which can-

not fail to arouse the most thoughtless mind to a sense of the wonderful works of creation. The Sea-flower had gone to the "low home over the commons." Hand in hand, that red man and the tender child, they went their way, to where he pointed out the graves of his people; there were no stones, not a mound to mark the spot. Why was there need of any? He alone knew the place; none others had cared to know, until now, when the number of his days had well-nigh been told, this little child, of a summer's day, had breathed upon those ice-bound springs, till they had broken their bands, and were gliding on in the bright sun-light, smoothly on,—on, forever. There did the Indian lay him down, where he would have them bury him; and there, for the first and last time, did he breathe a prayer over the graves of the departed, to that Great Spirit, whom he had been taught was the one great Father of all.

"Mother, poor Quady is not so strong as he used to be; when he pounds the corn, to make nice cakes for me, his hands tremble, and I notice he takes all the broth which you send to him, for he says he has no appetite for anything else."

It was a holiday. A great display of military had arrived from the continent.

"Sea-flower, you will see the beautiful horses, and the epaulets, the white plumes, and the shining swords, but they need not think to turn your brain with all their splendor."

"Brother Harry, I should like to see all those splendid things, but I had much rather go and see Quady to-day; it is several days since I have been there, and we have such good times! I love to talk with him so well."

"You strange little creature, you can go to see the Indian any time."

"Yes, but some how I feel as if I would like to go to-day. I know he will like to see me;" and the child was soon on her way to the "low home," with Nep, who carried the pail of broth. As she drew near, she saw that Quady was not sitting at his door, as he usually did, to watch for her, but instead, the door was closed, and everything around was still; nothing was heard, save the breakers as they dashed upon the shore. Opening the door, which was never fast, she saw before her, the form of poor Quady, stretched upon the rude bed, and as he tossed to and fro, in an

uneasy slumber, he muttered the words, — "pale-face — gone."

"Pale-face has come! Quady, Pale-face has come to you! Look up, and take some of the nice broth which I have brought."

Slowly he opened his eyes, and seeing the little one was by his side, he raised his hands aloft and said, "Me thank Great Spirit; me afraid Great Spirit take me home without seeing little Pale-face once more. Me see my brothers soon; a little while, and Pale-face come to see us. Great Spirit bless little Pale-face," he feebly said; "she make poor Quady happy."

With that dying blessing his spirit took its flight. He had passed away, the last one of his kind, he who had lived a life of solitude, apart from the world, looking upon the white man as having taken from him his home, his lands, and the forests which would have been his if the white man had not, long years ago, laid them low; yes, he had breathed a blessing, with his last breath, upon the pale-face. He who had not a brother left to bury him, had thanked God that the Pale-face had come to close his eyes; yes, it was the voice of childhood which had made his last mo-

ments happy, had pointed out the road which leads the wanderer home.

It was a scene to melt the hardest heart; that little child, scarcely as high as the rude couch, reaching up to close the eyes of him whom she should see no more. As she sat by his side, and looked around the room where she had spent so many happy hours, a sense of loneliness crept over her. There was the pipe which he had smoked, laid away on the little chimney-piece, and by the bed-side was the pail of broth with which she had thought to please him so much; and at the remembrance she burst into tears, and her tears fell upon the hand of him who lay sleeping. Neptune, hearing the sad tones of his mistress, came and looked into her face; and when she took no notice of him, he crouched at her feet, and howled piteously. And thus they found them, for the little one could not think of leaving her dear Quady there alone. They buried him, as he had wished, by the side of his brothers; and when the Sea-flower gazed into that narrow house, so dark and still, she looked up and said, "Mother, I shall love to look at the stars oftener now, for he has gone to live among those bright

and shining ones." Sadly did the child miss her visits to the "low home," and when in years to come her thoughts wandered over the past, her love for the poor lone Indian had not diminished. The stars shone brighter and brighter, even as her light was "shining unto the perfect day."

"What little missy look up in de sky so much for?" asked Vingo, as he walked by the shore, with Sea-flower in his arms, as was his custom of a bright moonlit evening.

"O, Vingo, it is so beautiful! I was watching those fleecy clouds, until they seemed to be little waves in which the stars were sailing upward, up, and as they looked back to us, their smile seemed to grow purer; and I think I can see Quady among them. Do n't you see him, Vingo?"

"Does you mean dose little black specks in de moon, missy?"

"No, Quady is one of the bright ones now; and you will be made white, too, when you go there. Do n't you want to go and be one of those bright ones, Vingo?"

"Does all de white folks go dar?"

"Yes, if they love God when they are here; if

they are good he will take them home to be with him."

"Den I do n't tink I wants to go dar."

"O, Vingo! that is very wicked! Why do n't you want to go?"

"'Cause, missy, dey say old slabe massa am one ob de best men in de whole ob Berginny, and I 's 'fraid he catch Bingo and tie him up again."

At that moment a shadow was seen in the distance, and Harry came bounding over the ground on the wings of the wind.

"Ah! I thought I should find you here, Seaflower, making the acquaintance of some of your sisters, as they hold up their heads in the moonlight. Vingo, what do you think? Father has received orders to sail in a week!"

"O, go way, massa Harry; what you mean by dat?" said Vingo, letting fall his lower jaw, while the whites of his eyes looked as if they had some time or other been in contact with a ghost.

"I mean that the Tantalizer will be ready for sea in a week, and Father will go master of her on a Cape Horn voyage. O, if father would only let me go with him, how delighted I should be! But he says I am too young, that I am not strong

enough; yet I know of boys two or three years younger than I am, who have been around Cape Horn, and are now making a second voyage. I have often heard old Captain Wendall tell of the first voyage father made, when he was but ten years old, and how nimbly he ran up to the mast-head, and was always the first to discover the whale as she spouted, and would sing out, 'there she blows!' equal to an old tar. I must prevail on father to let me go with him."

"Dear, dear Harry, do not talk so! Only think how mother will feel to have father go! He has been at home so long, ever since I was born, and how would she feel to have you both go away, and no one but Vingo and myself to comfort her."

"No one but you to comfort her? You are worth a dozen like me, darling!" and the little manly fellow threw his arms around her neck, and felt that he had the very best sister in the world.

"Ah! young massa, I tinks you hab de right sort ob spirit; you 's born to be no land-lubber; but it my 'pinion you had better stay wid good, kind missus and de Sea-flower a while longer; you not find a better berth, I 'm tinkin'."

"No, that I shall not; let me go where I will, I shall not find a mother like her; and as for Sea-flower, I do n't believe there was ever another in the whole ocean like her."

"How funny you talk, Harry; you make me think of little Moses in the bulrushes."

"Ah! there goes a gull, flying over my right shoulder, headed seaward; the sailor's omen of good luck; perhaps father may change his mind, after all."

"Harry, I want you to promise me you will say nothing about going to sea before mother; will you promise?"

"I never could refuse you anything, little pussy, but you do not say anything about yourself; would you not like to get rid of such a graceless fellow?"

"The child's sympathies had been so wrapped up in her mother's grief, that it had not occurred to her mind how much she should miss her dear father; and as she thought of Harry, who had always played so gently with her, and came every night, after her mother had heard her prayers, and told such beautiful stories, about the good little fairies, until she fell asleep, and dreamed they had

all come to be her sisters; and was awakened in the morning by the tramping of so many little feet, (in near proximity to those brown curls, which seemed to have been awake long before their mistress), and saw fourteen blue eyes looking at her, besides two roguish black ones, behind the curtain, which she did not see, and would wonder if it might not have been the kittens, after all, that had whispered in her ear. As she thought of all his kindness to her, she was silent; and as the negro drew the mantle more closely about her, he wondered if the little drop which fell upon his hand was of dew.

Preparations for the sailing of the Tantalizer were rapidly going on. She was a stout-built ship of three hundred tons burthen, the pride of her owners; and why should she not have been? for many a rich cargo had she brought to them, thousands and thousands of dollars had she added to their possessions; many a hurricane had she outrode, and as she sat so proudly on the water, she looked as if she might outlive many more. Captain Grosvenor had sailed master of her upon six successive voyages, making a "telling" voyage each time, until, his fortune becoming suffi-

ciently ample, he had thought to spend the rest of his days on shore; but, after a respite of seven years, he had become so restless, and so longed to try his fortune upon the water again, that, receiving a flattering offer from those in whose employ he had formerly sailed, he consented, as he said, "for the last time," to make a voyage in his favorite Tantalizer. Mrs. Grosvenor had earnestly hoped that her husband would follow the sea no more, knowing that their means were sufficient to supply all their wants; and since God in his providence had consigned this little one to their care, she had congratulated herself that there was one more tie to bind her husband to his home; and, indeed, the child was as dear to him as if she had been his own flesh and blood; and as those last seven years upon shore stood up before him, now that he was about to leave all that was dear to him, as having been spent more in keeping with God's laws than in any previous part of his life, he felt that he was a better man. Naturally of a noble, generous disposition, he had gained the respect of all who knew him. Pleasant and gentlemanly in his manners, he was no less firm in his duties on shipboard, and his stern

word of command was received by his men with the same hearty "aye, aye," as when he cracked a joke with them over the club-room fire. Harry had kept his promise in regard to his wish to go with his father; and when he looked into his mother's face, and saw how mournful was her smile, he felt that it would indeed be cruel to think of leaving her. But when he heard the sailors saying, as he clambered up the rigging, that it was a pity such a sprightly little fellow could not go along with them, his desire to ship for the voyage knew no bounds, and seeking his father, in the cabin, he had a long interview with him, gaining the promise that when he should return he would secure for him a good lay, and that he might then commence the nautical career, which the captain plainly saw his inclinations had marked out.

The day had arrived when the ship would sail. Every thing had been made ready for a long voyage, should the captain not meet with his usual good fortune, which was considered unnecessary by her owners, so sanguine were they of her success; such implicit faith did they place in the abilities of her captain, that in securing his services, they

looked upon the voyage as told. Ah! who can tell if that proud ship may ever return? Was there not one who looked upon her thus? Within that happy home, now so desolate, sat the wife of him who had just taken his leave of her, and the bitterness of that hour who can tell? She only who has tasted the same cup of sorrow; she who has given to the mercies of the deep him whom she holds most dear on earth. Such an one can indeed realize what were the feelings of that wife, as she sat at the window, her eye fixed upon the ship which was bearing away him whom she might never see more. The white sail is smaller and smaller, until it appears but a speck, and is finally lost in the distance. And then what a sense of desolation! Oh, might we all seek for strength in time of trouble, of Him who will not turn a deaf ear to the cries of his children! Who hath said, "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." Would that all might seek for comfort in the hour of trial, as did that stricken one,—in prayer! The Sea-flower had, with Harry, accompanied her father in the ship, as she was towed out by the steamer over the bar. As they were about to cast off, when the steamer

should return, the father sought to bid his children farewell. Turning to his boy, he bade him be all that a son and brother should be. With one long embrace his eye rested upon the Sea-flower; his voice failed him.

"Father," said the child, "you will soon come to us again; then you will never leave us;" pointing to a little cross which she had privately embroidered and set up in his state-room, she said, "you will be happy, father, so happy, on the water! But sometimes, when the stars look down upon you, or the great waves break over your ship, you will want to see us; and when you look at the pretty name which you gave me," (pointing out the word Natalie, which was wrought upon the foot of the cross), "you may know that I am thinking of you. Our hearts shall be with you."

With a father's blessing upon his children, he suffered them to be taken away; and as the loud huzza went up from the deck of the steamer, he saw his little one gazing back upon him, from amidst the waving banners, with a look which sank into his heart; her gentle words were still sounding in his ear, and it would seem as if that

voice of childhood was of riper years. Her words were never forgotten. Over the spirit of the child there came that which she had never known before; ah! gentle one, it is but the first drop of bitterness which must be mingled with the sweets in every life. May the All-Father keep thy feet from hidden thorns, strewing thy pathway only with the sweet flowers of innocence! He had gone; and the heart of the Sea-flower echoed,—"he has gone;" the very breeze which wafted him from home sighed "gone." Is there a heart which never knew the tone?

CHAPTER IV.

WESTWARD HO!

"I hear the tread of pioneers,
Of nations yet to be;
The first low wash of waves, where soon
Shall roll a human sea." J. G. WHITTIER.

"Far on the prairies of the West,
A lovely floweret grows;
With glowing pen, each traveller oft
Describes the Prairie Rose.

"For ages there alone it grew,
The prairie's gem and pride;
But now the Rose of Sharon fair
Is blooming at its side."

MRS. J. H. HANAFORD.

"OCH, sure, mem, and it 's meself that 's afther a thinking that we shall be raching good ould Ireland, from the ither side of this great Ameriky, if we kape on."

"Have patience, Biddy, we shall be there to-morrow at this time; there is nothing like keeping up good courage."

"Cabbage! mem, and it's meself has not seen a hapurth of a cabbage since we stopped the last time, to get a bit to sustain hunger, sure; I think mem, they must have rolled off, when the kitchen mirror and gridiron dhraped down," said Biddy, desirous to atone in some way for the disappearance of sundry heads of cabbage, which she had found means of disposing of, even in its unprepared state, while buried among washtubs, cheese-presses, and churns.

"Bad luck to the likes of it, indade!" and she caught at a small dining-table just in time to set it upon its legs again.

"I do n't wonder Biddy complains, mother; it 's enough to weary the patience of Job, riding so slowly over these dismal prairies; it would really do my eyes good to get sight of a hill, or any thing to break this continual sameness. What can father be thinking of, to take us to such a lonely, out of the way place? Never mind, Biddy, we shall have the pleasure of seeing where the sun goes to."

Thus spake the occupants of a long, covered wagon, moving westward, drawn by four stout oxen, with as many horses and cows following in the rear.

"Drive on there, Patrick," called out Mr. Santon, who was riding his own horse by their side; "drive on, we must get to the settlement by another night."

"Yes, sir, I am afther urging on the bastes for the last piece or two; but the crathurs have come so far, they do n't know, sure, if they be jist laving home, or afther a raching there."

Mr. Santon had formerly been a merchant in the city of Boston; he had been doing a heavy business, and had accumulated a handsome fortune, but being one of those easy sort of persons, who think everybody as honest as themselves, he had, in an evil hour, endorsed largely for those who were worse than swindlers, who had not even as much as thanked him for his name; and he had lost nearly all in that one act. Many friends he had, who knowing his worth, had kindly offered their assistance, and would willingly have set him on his feet again, for they disliked to lose so valuable a citizen from their

midst; but he, declining all assistance from those, whom he knew gave not grudgingly, thanked them with a grateful heart, and taking what little was left to him after paying his debts, had started with his wife and only child, and two servants whom he had retained, for the far West, intent upon leading a quiet, unmolested life, in the bosom of his family. Having supplied himself with all requisite tools, etc., for tilling the ground, for which occupation he had always a great desire, they had now, after a fatiguing journey of fourteen days, arrived at the little log-house, in the western part of the state of Ohio, which was to be their future home. This was a great change for Mrs. Santon, who had spent the most of her days in the city, and had always servants to call upon for her least wish, never being obliged to lift a finger against her desire. She was one of the best of women, with a kind word for every one, and greatly did the poor, upon whom she had bestowed so many gifts of charity, lament her departure. In the church, the sewing-society, by the bedside of the suffering, and in the home of poverty, had she a place; her worth was known to all. Cheerfully did she resign all to go

with her husband, to follow him, wherever it might be; with him would she be happy in their home, though it might be ever so humble. Their daughter of ten years was a sprightly, pretty child, with dark hair, and bright, black, tell-tale eyes, which looked as if they might make sad havoc, when a few more years should have added to their brilliancy. Resembling her mother in features, her disposition was like her father; free and easy in her ways, she was happy so long as every thing bent to her wishes; but her mother could not but notice with regret that her child had acquired a hasty, impatient manner, which the indulgence of her father in no way served to improve; yet she was a warm-hearted little creature, and it was with great difficulty that Mrs. Santon could bring herself to censure her. Still the mother must do her duty toward her child, and many a prayer had been offered, that she might have strength to act aright.

The long covered wagon stopped at the door of their new home just as the sun was going down.

There was but one house in sight of their little cabin, and that was, if anything, still smaller than their own; nothing was to be seen on all sides

but wide prairie land, and as the little Winifred cast her eye around, she exclaimed:

"O! mother, what shall we do here? I am sure I shall not like to stay; there is no one here."

"You forget that God is here, my child," said the mother; and she commenced assisting Biddy in setting up some few articles that would make them comfortable through the night, while her husband, with Pat, attended to the out-door affairs.

"Och, and sure, mem," said Biddy, as she put her emerald head in at the door of the cabin; "faith, and it 's not yesilf, mem, that 's going to rest in the same room with the likes of me."

"Yes, Biddy, I see no other way; we shall have to get used to western life. I think, by partitioning off one corner, here, with blankets, we shall get along very well; and then it will be right handy for you in the morning to get the breakfast; you will not have the trouble of coming down stairs."

"Yes, mem, yese makes everything so asy like! but it 's such strange times for yese, mem!" and Biddy went flying about the room, her face glowing with excitement, pulling at every uneven

log in the house, fully persuaded there must be some other apartment, if no more than a closet; and as she caught at a loose board, which only separated them from the open air, she looked through, delighted that she had discovered another room, and that her mistress would not now be obliged to share the same apartment with herself; for as the remembrance of certain devotional exercises to be gone through, over each bead in her rosary, came to her, she had her doubts if the "blissed St. Pathrick," (who, for reasons best known to herself, was her favorite saint), would condescend to listen to petitions offered from such near proximity to the unbelieving Protestants; not that she thought her mistress was not a most excellent woman, but she was a Protestant, and often had she called upon the blissid St. Patrick, to "bring her dear lady over to the thrue faith." As she bent down to look into the opening, congratulating herself upon the discovery, a large cat darted through, full into her face, and ran with speed out at the door.

"Och, murther! and may the good saints presarve us alive! What will become of us at all?" and in her fright she went headlong into a pile of

milk-pans, her unwieldy arms making certain involuntary revolutions, causing the air to resound with a chorus, which might have done credit to the first callithumpian in the land.

"Ho! what is all this?" cried Mr. Santon, who had stepped in at the commencement of the prelude; "what are you looking for under those pans, Biddy?"

"Sure, sir, and it's mesilf that's afther being exterpretated intirely! The varmints! faith, there was a dozen, sir, came scratching at me;" and she pointed at the aperture, as if in dread expectation of seeing their ghosts in pursuit; but lo! instead, there was the full, round face of Pat, who, having been left to take up his night's lodging with the creatures, in the apology for a barn, had espied the light, and not being able to resist the temptation of getting one more glimpse at the "swate Biddy," he had ventured to look in, and catching a glimpse of her woebegone face from among the shining tins, he exclaimed:

"Och, honey dear, and has it come to this? that yese obliged to make yese bed of the likes of that! And if ye'll wait a bit it's mesilf that'll run and fetch some of the nate, saft sthraw, that ye

can fill the tins, and 'twill do ye betther; indade, and it 's none but a hathen that could endure the likes of that!"

"Ah! Pathrick, is it ye? and was ye pint up in there wid the crathurs?"

"Yes, it 's mesilf that will be risting with the bastes, the night," said Pat, thinking she had alluded to the creatures in the barn; "and I 'll be wishing ye swate dhrames, and a plinty'of thim;" saying which he disappeared, leaving the trembling Biddy in great anxiety of mind as to what should be his fate.

As the little Winnie peeped out from behind the screen, when they had all retired, and saw Biddy counting her beads, with her eye still fixed upon the spot where she had last seen the smiling Patrick, she laughed outright, in spite of the crevices in the roof overhead, and she laid her down and looked up at the stars which came twinkling in upon her, 'till those great black eyes gradually diminished in size, and her little brain was busily engaged among the familiar scenes of the home which she had left so far away.

Cautiously did Biddy, with the first dawn of day, advance toward where she had dreamed her

poor "Pathrick" was in close contact with the veritable bastes, and the family was awakened from their slumbers by her loud tones, lamenting that "niver a vistage of Pathrick, the cats, or the ante-room was left," for on looking out, the only object which met her gaze was the sun, which was just coming up in the east.

"What 's the time, Biddy?" asked Mrs. Santon.

"And it 's jist about three hours afther sunrise, mem."

"I think you must be mistaken, Biddy; we cannot surely have been sleeping so long after our usual time for rising."

"Indade, and the sun bes jist coming in sight, and it must have been a powerful time travelling over, sure. I 'm thinking they must be afther dhrying their takettles a long time, back there in ould Boston."

Time passed on, and our adventurers were becoming more and more accustomed to western life. Mr. Santon had found his lands to be in a very good state of cultivation, the former owner having been a Dutchman, who thoroughly understood what a good farm ought to be. Mrs. San-

ton had proved herself to be one of the best of housekeepers, and greatly did she pride herself on her abilities for filling the station of a farmer's wife. As they sat down of an evening, to their meal of bacon and Indian cakes, and contrasted their present circumstances with what had been their former situation in life, they could not repress a smile at the change; but they were happy, contented in their humble home, and the bread which had been earned by the sweat of the brow was sweeter, the social enjoyments dearer, than when in fashionable life they had been obliged to live with an eye to the customs of society; even Winnie had found some attractions in their little western home. The neighbors comprising those who lived for twenty miles around, the nearest being a mile distant, were pleasant, light-hearted people, and the civilities which were shown to the new comers were without end.

A small log-house, unlike the others of the settlement in its exterior, inasmuch as it was honored with an additional door, served as their place of worship; and it was with great joy that Winnie looked forward to Sunday morning, when, mounted upon her pony, she might ride off for six

miles to the church, accompanied by her father and mother, each riding their respective horses. Arrived at the church, they dismounted at the great horse-block, leaving their hats and mantles thereon, as was the custom ; and it was a pretty sight to see the ladies walking into church, their cheeks g'owing with exercise, and the fresh, morning air. As Winnie entered, her long curls composing themselves after a frolic with the breeze, many a sly glance was aimed at her from the neighboring pews, in spite of the consciences of their owners reminding them that it was holy day. It was a source of great comfort to Mrs. Santon, that she was able to come so far to this place of worship. The little society numbered not over forty persons, yet those words spoken by our Saviour, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I be in the midst of them," came with renewed freshness to her mind, each time she entered those doors, and she felt that she had never tasted the bliss of uninterrupted love for Christ, as now.

The shepherd of this little flock was a man fearing God, just, and upright; his services in the cause of Christ were offered voluntarily, without

money, or price. Coming, as he had, in his old age, to spend the remainder of his days in the family of a beloved son, he had found with joy that his declining years might be profitably employed; that he might earn that reward which is promised to those who make a right use of the talents which God has given them; that he might merit those blessed words, "well done, good and faithful servant." His labors among this people had not proved ineffectual; many had been brought to see the great mercies of their Redeemer, souls had been converted to Christ, and as the song of praise went up from beneath that humble roof, the glad shouts were borne aloft, and angels joined in the chorus.

* * * * * * * * * *

It was a beautiful afternoon, everybody was busy about the farm of Mr. Santon; Winnie was sitting at the door, intent upon her own thoughts, when she caught sight of their good minister approaching upon his horse, his silver locks flying in the wind. Biddy, learning they were to have a visit from the "Protestant praste," turned first pale, then red, and when the old gentleman dismounted at the door, she let fall the shoulder of

bacon, which she was preparing for the supper, and darted behind the screen, in her haste hitting her foot against the lowest tin, in a pile of two dozen, which brought the rest down to inquire into the state of affairs.

The presence of the old gentleman served to impart a cheerfulness to all who gazed upon his happy countenance, and his kind tones, as he inquired for the welfare of the family, penetrated the screen, reaching the ear of Biddy, who sat wondering what the good father Teely would say, if he knew she had so far sinned as to remain under the same roof with a "wicked Protestant praste;" but as she heard him speaking to Pat, who had come in of an errand, with such a pleasant voice, she ventured a peep out, and the form of her thoughts just at that moment, might have been a little, a very little, savoring of heresy. Suffice it to say, when the old gentleman took his departure, there was a peculiar twinkle in Biddy's eye, and she had so far overcome her aversion to the "imposther" as to have had a few private words with him, which had by no means decreased her usual flow of good spirits. It was evident that Biddy "had on her high

heels," for the rest of that evening. As Winnie strolled over the farm, enjoying the evening breeze, reflecting upon her good pastor's words, her attention was suddenly attracted toward the enclosure where the cows were being milked, by hearing the voice of Biddy, who, as she "stripped" the patient animal again, for the dozenth time, was very much engaged with Pat, whose round, smiling face, as he glanced at her from the opposite side of the creature, shone with delight; and as the white foam rose higher and higher in Biddy's pail, so did the warmth of her feelings get the better of her, and those tell-tale eyes of Winnie's danced with mischief, as she overheard the following conversation:

"Ah, Pathrick dear, does ye think there is the laste sin in it? And indade, it's mesilf that's thinking the blissid St. Pathrick would be afther misthaking him for a good Catholic!"

"And what did he say, honey dear? did he think he could be afther comforting the likes of us?"

"Thrath, and he did; it was himsilf that said niver a word when I was spaking to him about it, but was afther showering a blissing upon us, the dear sowl!"

"But what will the praste say? Biddy, sure he'll be very angry, intirely."

"Faith, and it's no longer ago than the day afther yesterday, that the misthress was saying if we confissed our sins with a right spirit, we should be afther being forgiven; and now, Pathrick, I'm thinking we'll be afther getting married, and then there will be a plinty of time for confissing."

"Och, honey, and that's the thruth for ye," said the assenting Pat, and together they walked towards the cabin.

Winnie, putting that and that together, made up her mind that Patrick and Biddy had become tired of a life of single blessedness, and were seriously contemplating matrimony, which was, indeed the case; and Biddy, having made known her desires to her mistress, who saw no just cause why they should not be bound together in the holy bands of wedlock, the next Wednesday was set apart when Patrick and Biddy would be made husband and wife.

The day arrived, and Biddy, arrayed in her best snuff-color, with ribbons and laces to match, stood up with him of her choice, to pronounce those vows which should make them one, even though

the ceremony should be performed by a Protestant.

"Will you take this woman to be your wedded wife?" spake the reverend gentleman, in a clear, distinct tone.

"Ah! kape on, kape on!" shouted the enraptured Pat; "do n't be throublin yesilf with questions; dear knows it 's mesilf that 's in it;" and his smiling face was mirrored in numerous brass buttons, which were hanging around his buff vest.

As soon as the old gentleman could get his voice again, for the boisterous joy of Pat, he turned to the trembling Biddy.

"Do you take this man to be your lawful husband, and leaving all others, will you cleave unto him alone?"

"Indade, your Riverence!" exclaimed Biddy, "I 'll be afther claving him all the days of me life! It 's not mesilf, sure, that was always born and reared in the great city of Cork, that 'll be doing things by halves!" and in her happiness she caught Pat around the neck, giving him a smack, which might have been attributed to the opening of the bottle of whiskey with which Mr. Santon had graced the occasion, had it not been for those

great eyes of Winnie, which would discover the accident, in spite of their mistress's endeavors to direct their attention elsewhere.

And now Patrick and Biddy were husband and wife. Never was there a more devoted couple; the days glided pleasantly on, Biddy keeping time in her endeavors to please her mistress with the joys of her heart; everything went on cheerfully, not a note of discontent was heard, except that the little Winnie would sometimes break into sighing for the pleasures of her early home. Nothing occurred to disturb the quietude of this home in the West, until early in the ensuing Fall, when Mrs. Santon was taken with a violent attack of Western fever, which threatening to undermine her health, Mr. Santon was fearful lest they should be obliged to return East; but the fever leaving her, she was again able to attend to her duties, with only an occasional "shake," and the discussion as to their return was for the present discontinued.

CHAPTER V.

THE OUTWARD BOUND.

"Go in thy glory o er the ancient sea,
Take with thee gentle winds thy sails to swell,
Sunshine and joy upon thy streamers be;
Fare thee well, bark; farewell!"

MRS. HEMANS.

Farewell; God knows when we shall meet again.
I have a faint, cold fear thrilling through my veins,
That almost freezes up the heat of life."

SHAKSPEARE'S "ROMEO AND JULIET."

As the dews of heaven fall gently, lulling the flowers to rest, so did the low, clear voice of the Sea-flower soothe the weary spirits of Mrs. Grosvenor, as she read from the evening paper the following paragraph:

"Spoken by bark Constitution, of New York, in latitude 39° 20′, longitude 45°, ship Tantalizer, of Nant., Capt. I. W. Grosvenor, eighty days from home; had taken seventy barrels of sperm oil,

and was made fast to a forty-barrel right whale: would sail for South Seas in a few days; all well."

"Hurrah for father!" exclaimed Harry; "he will be at home in less than two years, at that rate, and then he promised me that I should see what old ocean is made of!"

My son, you will learn full soon what a life at sea is; your bright visions may indeed some of them be realized, the many dangers to which you will be exposed, will not serve to mar your joys, for to such a heart as yours they will pass unheeded; but for all that, my son, you will meet with many hardships, of which you little know. I would wish you never to follow the sea, my boy, but if you are still determined upon it, when your father returns I shall have to give my consent, though with reluctance. You will then be old enough to choose your own pursuits for life, and whatever they may be, remember, Harry, to lead an honest, upright life, never losing sight of your early instructions, and the prayers of your mother."

As Mrs. Grosvenor ceased speaking she looked upon her son, and could hardly realize that her little rosy-cheeked Harry, who had loved to lay his

head upon her bosom, and listen while she told him of his father, who had gone away over the blue water, to get such pretty things for his boy, had grown to be a tall lad of fifteeen years; and well might she have been proud of her son, for the nobleness of his soul was apparent in every feature. As Vingo expressed himself, "Young massa Harry am got up ob what neber would get used to de atmosphere ob old Berginny."

"Mother," said Harry, "I shall never forget your teachings. I shall always hold them sacred in my heart, and wherever I go, in whatever circumstances I am placed, I will be true to you, my mother;" and he pressed a fervent kiss upon the brow of her who was worthy the name.

As Mrs. Grosvenor returned her son's embrace, she felt that perhaps she had said too much; that she had been selfish in wishing to have him always near her; and she observed that he wore an expression of pain, of deep emotion, which he in vain attempted to conceal.

The Sea-flower had rested her head upon her hand, and while her mother had been engaged with Harry, a silent spectator might have wondered to what unseen object those deep oases of

love were imparting their purity. The words of Harry had fallen upon her ear, — "I shall see what old Ocean is made of;" shall we follow in the train of her musings? they will lead us not where the fallen tread. On the banks of the still waters of peace, 'neath the willows, whose tears are of innocence, frisk the tender lambs, who taste only of the sweets of the green pasture: — "I shall see what old ocean is made of." Far away in coral dells, where the nymphs of ocean tune their harps in praise to Nature's God, the Sea-flower loves to ramble, as if she had been a child in time long past, and the mysteries of ocean were that childhood's home. Ah, loved one, thou dost not pause to find what 'tis which makes thy heart to beat in unison with the murmuring of the waters! perchance those restless billows are but the echoings of thy soul's desire to breathe that upper air, and breathing, gasp for more. 'Tis not for us to tell thee that bright ones came down, and bore the spirit of her who gave thee life, to that better land, from hence; nor of the dying prayer, "Lord, keep my child," which was caught up by each listening billow, and the supplication, e'er since renewed by the voices of the deep.

Why Mrs. Grosvenor had spoken thus, upon this evening to her son, she could not tell; she felt there was some irresistible power which bade her speak that charge, — "never lose sight of your early instructions, and the prayers of your mother." As she retired early for the night, feeling slightly indisposed, she met the gaze of Harry, which was fixed upon her, attributing its uncommon earnestness to a determination on his part to cherish her words. And he never did forget them. But, ah! fond mother, sleep on, take thy rest, and gain strength for the morrow's rising, for thou knowest not of the cup of sorrow which is being prepared for thee.

As Harry sat watching the bright flames as they went crackling up the chimney, his sister came and rested her head upon his shoulder, where they remained, until Sea-flower, reminding him of the lateness of the hour, was about to retire, when her brother threw his arm about her, begging her to remain a little, for, said he, "I shall not always have my dear sister to comfort me."

"To comfort you! Harry, do you, who are always so light-hearted and joyous, need comforting?"

"Ah, pussy, but you can make the happiest heart happier. I was thinking of mother; it is a comfort to me that she has you, Sea-flower, to cheer her lonely hours."

"I think mother is less sad than she has been, for now she is looking forward to the time when father shall come home; and I think she flatters herself that she can dissuade you from going to sea, and then we shall be an unbroken, happy family once more."

Those words! why had they power to make that boy turn pale? Had he not been screened from the bright glow of the fire-light, the Sea-flower must have noticed his agitation, as she looked up for the good-night kiss; he clasped her in his arms for a moment, and then the door closed upon her gentle form.

The old clock in the church tower had struck eleven, and Harry heard the cry of the watch, "all 's well." He still stood where he had parted with his sister; as her last footfall upon the stairs died away, and the house was hushed for the night, the plans which he had matured long days ago, for this night's execution, laid fast hold of him. Can it be possible that the boy is about to

forget those last words of his mother? No, they are still sounding in his ear; and his promise, "I will not forget the prayers of my mother." But does he consider, in the step which he is about to take, of the arrow which will pierce that mother's heart? He walks the room with a quick tread; he does reflect, and pities his mother from the bottom of his heart, praying that the blow may fall gently; but he has shipped for a voyage in the Nautilus, and this night, at high tide, she will sail.

Noiselessly he ascends to his room, and taking his clothes from the drawer, where they had been placed with care, makes them into a bundle, not forgetting the little bible, which was given him by his mother only the day before, as a birthday gift. Pausing in the upper hall, he listens, if he may get one last faint sound from those he holds so dear; but save the uneasy slumbers of Vingo, nothing is heard. All is now ready for his departure; stepping into the parlors, where hang the portraits of the family, he takes a farewell of each. The Sea-flower and his mother! his eyes fill with tears, and his heart is swelling into his throat; he is upon the point of retracing his steps, when his eye rests upon the features of his father.

The daring boldness of the expression, which the artist had but too well portrayed, fires him with fresh courage; every nerve thrills with new life, and kissing the inanimate canvas, as if it were indeed his dear mother and sister, he tore himself away from home. Walking rapidly down the deserted street, without venturing a look back, he passes many an endeared object; the old white church, where he has been accustomed to worship, Sunday after Sunday, for many years, holds high its head in the bright moonlight, and the hands of the old town clock upon the tower, seem to beckon him to return. He falters; it would seem as if the very doors of the church would open and receive him. Throwing down the bundle, he kneels upon the door-stone, and breathes a prayer to heaven, to bless those who will enter therein when he shall be gone. Pressing his lips to the cold stone where *they* have trod, he rises, when lo! standing by his side, with the package of clothes in his mouth, is the old house dog, Nep; and as the watch in the tower cries, "past eleven o'clock, and all is well," he looks wistfully into his master's face, as if he would ask, is all well? What is to be done? in less than half an

hour the ship will be towed out into the stream; there is no time to be lost, but the dog will not think of leaving his master, for his experience of years tells him it is a new thing for the boy to be wandering from home at this unseasonable hour. In vain did Harry attempt to drive the faithful creature from him, for never having been an unwelcome companion before, the dog did not understand his master's threatening gestures; yet he could understand that something was amiss, and for that reason kept close upon his master's heels, to shield him from all danger.

Arriving at the wharf, the boy once more attempted to drive the dog from him, when looking around, he espied a bit of rope, with which he made him fast to a post, and then clambered up the ship's side. Poor Nep, keeping his eye upon his master, laid him quietly down, until the lines were cast off, and the ship began to recede from the shore. O, Harry, could you leave the companion of your infancy thus, made fast to a yard rope, to shiver in the night air? It was his only alternative, for in taking Neptune with him he well knew would be robbing the household of one more endearment. No sooner had the ship started

from her moorings, and Nep saw that his master was being borne away, than he gave a piteous howl, and with one bound parted the line which held him, and plunging into the tide, made vigorous attempts to reach the ship.

"Breakers on the larboard bow!" sung out the captain, who stood laughing to see the labors of the poor animal, who was becoming exhausted; "let's see who 'll have the first harpoon!" and he hurled a billet at the dog's head as he was going down for the second time. Harry, seeing the action, cried out, "Save him! who will save my poor Nep?" and fell fainting upon the deck. Fortunately the hard-hearted man had missed his mark for once, and by the light of the moon, the poor fellow was seen, just under the bows, struggling feebly, as if about to give up, when an old tar, who had heard Harry's cry for help, sprang with the rapidity of thought, and seizing a rope, made it into a slip-noose, throwing it over the dog's head, nearly strangling him as he drew him out of the water. Together they lay motionless upon the deck, Harry and Nep, when the captain coming along would have stumbled over them, had he not caught at a halliard near by.

"What in the name of things unheard of, is all this?" exclaimed he, with an oath; "this indeed is a curious beginning for the little land-lubber! I've the greatest mind to set him ashore, to come to his senses at his leisure, and if I'm not greatly mistaken, he's but a young runaway at best; but we might as well keep him now, he'll do for testing the strength of our cats, and as for that other critter, Mr. Sampson, you may hand him over to the steward, and tell him I shall want a nice overall when we get out where the ice makes an inch a minute."

Mr. Sampson, who had shipped as boat-steerer, the same that had rescued old Nep from drowning, lifted Harry in his arms, and carrying him below, laid him in his own hammock, where he also brought the dog, who was apparently lifeless, and laid him by his side. It was a long time before Harry was restored to consciousness, and when he had gained strength sufficient to raise himself upon one arm, he looked around in the darkness, perfectly bewildered; but as the remembrance of his situation slowly came to him, he called aloud, in agony of spirit, "Nep! poor drowned Neptune!" tossing upon his hammock,

his arm came in contact with the creature's shaggy coat. Could it be Nep? rescued from the inhuman treatment of the captain? but he did not move! was he alive? Harry sprang from his bed, and making his way in the darkness he knew not whither, finally found himself in the captain's state-room, which was unoccupied, and seizing a candle, reached his hammock just as Mr. Sampson returned.

"Man alive! where did you get that light?" asked Sampson, apparently much terrified.

"O, sir, I took the first one I could find, for I must see if my poor Neptune is dead!" and he bent over him, smoothing his head, calling loudly, "Neptune! poor Neptune!" Sampson, recognizing the silver candlestick as belonging in the captain's state-room, hastened to return it, knowing well what the consequences would be, if that dignitary discovered that any one had dared to enter his room without orders; and giving Harry a few friendly hints, as to what his liberties would be, under their commander, he drew out a mysterious looking bottle from his jacket-sleeve, and diluting a small quantity of its contents, gave it to Harry to drink, which in his

weak condition did not come amiss. Turning to the dog, the kind old tar commenced rubbing him vigorously, bathing his cold limbs with the spirit, glancing occasionally at the gangway, to see who might darken the descent. The dog at last gave signs of life, and to Harry's great joy, he looked up and recognized his master, Sampson assuring him, in his rough way, that the old fellow would soon be as good as new.

It was the last watch in the morning, and Harry, hearing loud voices on deck, ventured out. It was a clear, cold morning, the moon had gone down, and Venus was just rising in the east; on every side was the blue rolling water. They had left Nantucket miles behind. Sampson, who was on duty, seeing the boy looking out, as if he had come to the conclusion that the island had been submerged, shook out a reef in the line which he was making fast, that he might catch the boy's ear, and pointing to a dim light far down in the distant horizon, he remarked, "Look well, it's old Sankoty; I'm thinking you'll have seen different days when you make her again."

"Halloo, there, aft!" called out the captain; "has that kitten got to mewing? Bear a hand

there, and square your mizzen topsail," added he, a tone of mockery.

The order had hardly left his lips, when Harry, with a hearty "aye, aye, sir!" sprang into the cross-trees, and in a twinkling had reached the masthead, calling out in a voice which brought to the mind of each old tar that he had once a mother, — "square away it is, sir."

The captain could scarce believe his eyes; seeing by the smile upon the face of every man on deck, that he had been decidedly sold, he hailed him again.

"Mast-head, ahoy!"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Take your bearings from the fog bank to your leeward, and tell me how she heads."

The boy hesitated; he "saw which way the wind blew," and bethinking himself of a small pocket compass which he had about him, sung out, "East-south-east by east, sir, two points off." The man at the wheel responded, "East-south-east by east, two points off."

It would not do; the captain saw that he had mistaken his man, and called all hands to pipe down. As Mr. Sampson passed him, he doffed

his tarpaulin, remarking, " I think, sir, the youngster will do very well for trying the strength of our cats."

It was evident to Harry, before he had sailed many days under Captain Jostler, that he had one of the most tyrannical of masters. He had been a perfect stranger to him when he shipped for the voyage, being a native of Canada, and from the frozen condition of his heart no one would have doubted it; had he been a Nantucket man, master Harry would have found it more difficult in getting away so privately; as it was, no inquiries were made of him. How different was Harry's situation from what it would have been had his father procured for him a berth; as it was, he was doomed to no common hardships, for the captain, having taken a dislike to him from the first, seemed to take pleasure in making him as uncomfortable as possible; and had it not been that he was a favorite with the crew, he would have suffered many times from exposure. Many a cold, stormy night had he been ordered to take his turn in the watch, upon deck, in spite of the petitions of the men to fill his place; and he would walk the deck for hours, to keep from be-

coming benumbed with the cold; but, as his mother had predicted, the hardships and dangers to which he was exposed did not serve to dampen his spirits, and for that very reason, did the captain shower upon him many abuses; for in spite of his cruel treatment toward him, he never had had the pleasure of seeing him look anything but cheerful. At such times, when the wind was howling fiercely, and the salt spray came dashing over the deck, freezing upon the cheek of the youthful mariner, but never penetrating that heart, which was warmed by the remembrance of other days, the boy would think of home, of his mother, and as he uttered the name of the Sea-flower aloud, those deep-toned voices of the sea would appear as if the wild reëchoings of the tone; and the low moanings of the wind through the shrouds were of pity for that lone one on the deck of the "outward bound." Could the boy have had old Nep for a companion in his midnight watchings, he would have served to while away the time, but that pleasure was not allowed him, for Captain Jostler had threatened to throw the dog overboard, if he came in contact with him in any of his walks; consequently Harry had

doomed him to a life in the hold, seldom venturing to visit him, except to carry the food which he had saved from his own short allowance; and he often wondered how the poor fellow could keep alive on such short rations, not knowing of the purloined bits which were bestowed upon him from Sampson's commodious jacket-sleeve.

"There she blows! there she blows!" hailed the look-out from the mast-head, as a school of whales hove in sight, about three miles astern, one afternoon, when they had been four months on the whaling grounds. It was the first discovery that had been made, they having been thus far unsuccessful. All hands were immediately called up; every man was at his post, making ready for the coming scene of action; not as a man-of-war, in the charging of cannon, the priming of musketry, and the brandishing of swords, a battle between man and man, but the boats were lowered, the harpoons were got out, and everything was made ready for an encounter with the monster of the ocean. Now was the time when the captain would exhibit his skill as a whaler; all depends on his management as to their success; he must be cool, and collected,

working systematically; for not only does it require great skill and caution in the capturing of the whale, but there are many dangers attendant upon the encounter.

"There she blows!" No sooner did Captain Jostler hear the report, than it seemed as if he would go beside himself; every man was ready to do his duty, and had they possessed the right kind of commander, might have done well; but where there is no head, nothing is accomplished. Everything was confusion; the captain, springing into the first boat, bade his men follow, leaving, beside Harry, but two worthless fellows, who hardly knew a skysail from a jib-sheet, in charge of the ship. Harry kept his eye upon the boats for hours; he perceived they were evidently having a hard time of it. Running aft to get a glass, as they distanced him, he discovered a fog had sprung up, and was shutting in heavily on all sides; he returned to mark the boats; they were nowhere to be seen; he had lost them entirely; nothing was to be seen on all sides but thick fog banks! What was to be done? where they were, how far from the boats, and in what direction, they knew not. The boy was aware that they

were all ignorant of the management of the ship, and what was worse, should the least breeze spring up, they would be borne, — they knew not whither. A couple of hours passed, and the fog did not lift. Night was coming on, and from the increased darkness, together with a low, rumbling noise of the sea, it was evident a storm was brewing. Harry anxiously walked the quarter deck; it would be certain destruction if they remained in that position till night should overtake them. The boy called to the men, asking what was to be done; but they in terror could do nothing but lament their situation, calling out against the captain for leaving them in such a state. Harry hesitated; what was done must be done speedily. To take in sail was his first thought; then, with the assistance of the clumsy seamen, he rolled out a small cannon-piece, and for one long hour did he keep up an incessant fire. The coming storm was now plainly discernible; the distant rolling of thunder was heard, the sea was agitated, and occasionally a flaw would shake the rattlings. They were in momentary expectation that the storm would burst upon them. Harry had left his firing, and ascending the hurricane deck, stood

with folded arms, as if bracing himself to meet the foe. It is coming in all its fury! kind heaven! the fog lifts! it rolls itself away as it were a great scroll. The ink-black heavens are fearfully majestic, seen in the lightning's lurid glare. A speck! yes, 't is the boats! do they see them? Once more the boy flies to the cannon, not pausing to see if they are nearing the ship; his heart beats wildly; 't is their only chance for life! the hurricane has burst upon them! the enraged deep responds loudly to the deafening roar! Once again the feeble voice of the cannon is doing its best to be heard, when lo! the flash mingling with the forked lightnings which play in the rigging, reveals the men, as they come tumbling over the ship's side! They are saved! saved by that noble boy, who does not know of their approach, so intent is he upon his exertions, until Sampson clasps him in his arms, and a "God bless you!" is upon the lips of every man, save the captain, who, having received a slight wound from a harpoon, and irritated by their bad luck, utters a curse which vies in blackness with that dreadful night.

"Down your helm!" shouted the captain;

"hard down your helm!" The order was hardly given, when they were thrown on their beam ends; down, down they went, as if never to rise again, completely engulfed in the dark abyss! The boy, where is he? down in the hold, his arm made fast to the collar of old Neptune, that they may go down together; he kneels, his mother's gift, the bible, in his hand, calmly awaiting his time. Nature seems terrified, yet that boy knows no fear. Crash succeeds crash; ah, who can describe the scene! He alone who has stood upon the frail plank, which only separates him from death. Again a terrific crash, — their masts have gone by the board! It would seem that the enraged billows were bent upon their destruction. Still their stout bark is unwilling to give up, and trembling from stem to stern, she clings to life, nobly resisting the gigantic attacks of the storm-king, who, having fought with terrific fierceness through the livelong night, puts on a less demon-like expression as his strength is well nigh spent, and the gray dawn sees no traces of the despoiler, who perhaps has slain thousands, save the swelling surges, which angrily gaze as if disappointed of their prey.

At the first dawn of day, Harry went on deck to learn their situation. What a change had been wrought in a few hours. Their masts had been carried away, the decks had been swept clean; and he learned that several poor fellows had lost their hold, and were not seen more.

"Well, I'll be d——d if that son of a cannibal has n't sneaked away into some hole, and kept his footing," exclaimed the captain, as he saw the boy appear above deck; "I was in hopes he had found safe quarters in Davy Jones's locker! But there 's no getting rid of such scalawags!"

"Captain Jostler," cried Mr. Sampson, raising his hat, "it 's none of my business, and you may knock me down the next minute, if you please, but God knows there 's not a man aboard but owes his life to that boy. I have no mutinous designs, sir, but at such a moment as this I will speak, sir, come what will, and thank God the boy had sense enough to go below, when he knew he could be of no use here."

The captain looked daggers; he was about to seize Sampson by the throat, when a voice from the assembled crew was heard:

"Three cheers and long life to the boy, captain

or no captain! *Hurrah!* HURRAH!! HURRAH!!!" shouted the grateful tars, making the welkin ring.

If Jostler had had the heart of a brave, noble sea-captain, he would have fought right and left till the last, ere his men should dare to show such insubordination, setting his authority at defiance; but he was a coward, and they were whole-hearted seamen, who would not see the innocent trampled upon, consequently the villain had to swallow his wrath; but he was determined to have his revenge, and Sampson noticed that he cast an evil eye upon the boy.

Upon examination it was found they had sustained no injuries, besides the loss of the masts, except that a small leakage had been made near the bows, and that was soon repaired by the carpenter, who proceeded to rig jury-masts, and it was not long before they were put in a condition capable of running into the islands for repairs.

About sunrise signals of distress were heard, and by the glass, a dismasted ship was made out, a long way astern, apparently in a sinking condition. The captain appeared to take little notice of her, and as the mate ventured to inquire

if they should "'bout ship," he answered, "Thunder! no, we are safe; let them run their own chance."

Harry, hearing his reply, was shocked. Could the man turn a deaf ear to those repeated sounds of distress, when it was in his power to save them? Ah, boy, it is even so! but he is not a man. Harry could endure the thought no longer, as fainter and fainter grew the reports, as they bore away from them; he begged Sampson to implore the captain to return, Sampson telling him "it was of no use, that it would not do to cross him again."

"Then I will go myself to him; he cannot have the heart to leave them to perish!"

"Rash boy, your life will be the penalty! you must not do it."

"I will do my duty, though I should die for it! there is the least possibility of his hearing me, and what is one life compared with, it may be, a hundred."

"Stay, mad boy!" cried Sampson; but he had gone.

Reaching the quarter-deck, upon his knees he implored the captain to return. "Think, if it

were your father, brother, or a son, in that hopeless condition, would you not render them all the assistance in your power?"

"I have three brothers and a father upon the ocean," vociferated the demon; "for aught I know it may be one of them! but were they all aboard that hulk yonder, I would not return! But who are you, sirrah, that dares to usurp my power? Now, upstart, you shall know your place!" and he seized him by the collar, bore him aft, lashed him to a spar, called for the cat, and lifting it high in air, — it falls, but the cursed invention of man's cruelty falls wide of its mark! Ere its descent had scarred that fair brow, a rush was heard from the main gangway, and old Neptune, with a fierce growl, has fastened his teeth in the monster's flesh! Quick as thought his master called him off, and every man stood trembling, as they observed the captain feeling for his pistols; but his strength failed him, the dog had met his teeth in the wound received by the mismanagement of the harpoon, tearing the flesh nearly from off his limb. It really was a pitiable sight to behold. Faint from the loss of blood, he was carried below, where his wound was dressed

by one of the men, having no regular surgeon aboard, consequently its fatality was not realized. The groans and writhings of the sufferer were heart-rending; all day long did he rave, imploring Sampson, who attended him, to "take the fiend away! that he was being devoured alive!" and thus did he toss upon his bed till toward evening, when a change for the worse came over him. Sampson saw that the seal of death was stamped upon his features, and at set of sun, with an imprecation upon his dying lips, he had breathed his last. O, how fearful to enter that spirit land thus unprepared! to come before our Judge with a soul stained in the deepest sins, trembling with its burden of guilt. Lord, grant that we be not thus found when thou shalt call! Give us strength to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, so that at the last, we shall taste those joys which exist "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." They buried him in the deep sea. Perhaps his body lay side by side with those who, through his unfeeling heart, had found a watery grave; but we trust that, unlike him, they had gone to meet the reward of having lived an holy life,— gone to the "sailor's home," in the skies.

The stars shone out, one by one, in the firmament, when the king of day had descended. Calmly the night looked down, and undisturbed were Harry's thoughts, as seated upon the taffrail, old Neptune by his side, he once again breathed the air of liberty. Not that he rejoiced that he was thus freed from him who had kept him in perfect slavery, for he alone had dropped a tear over the uncoffined burial of his persecutor; but his heart was filled with gratitude, as he looked into the peerless night, — gratitude to Him who has given us a soul, that we may admire the works of his hands. As Harry sat musing, turning from the heavenly orbs to their semblance on the bosom of the placid waters, he observed, as it were, a fallen star, mirrored therein, but rousing his dreamy senses, he found it was a small, shining object, floating near them. He drew it from the water; it was a block of wood, in the form of an octagon, highly polished, inlaid with bits of pearl, forming grotesque figures, and thickly studded with some bright mineral, representing stars, which gave it a very handsome appearance.

"Well, if the youngster is n't picking up moonshine," remarked Sampson, examining the curi-

osity. "Some poor fellow designed that for his sweetheart, likely; but I suppose it will make but little difference with her, if she hears he 's among the missing, she can just as well set her colors for another. These bright-winged butterflies go upon the principle that 'there 's as good fish in the sea as ever was caught.'"

"O, ho, Sampson," cried the jolly faced mate, who had now taken the captain's berth, "you are inclined to give the fair ones no quarters. I should n't wonder if they had given you the slip, in some of your cruisings."

"Well, sir, nothing of that kind, exactly; I never had much notion for shipping under one captain for life."

"A little frightened, eh?"

"Well, between you and I, I was a little skeery, for fear I should find my mate at the helm."

"Yes, but you do n't mean to say woman is a craft sailing without a compass, do you? that is, minus a heart?"

"Aye, aye, but it 's hard to get in their wake. I never met but one whole-souled woman in my life, and she has gone — where such as she do go.

Ah, that was a hard time! I was the only one saved of two hundred!"

"How was that, Sampson? come, spin us that yarn."

"Land ho! land ho!" hailed the lookout, and every eye welcomed Manilla, as they ran in for repairs, after cruising about for months without taking a drop of oil. Harry was delighted with the prospect before him, and laying the little curiosity, which would remind him of a sad event in his voyage, away with his bible, he entered upon the duties before him with his whole heart, realizing the visions of his earlier days, and gaining a thorough knowledge of — the life of a sailor boy.

CHAPTER VI.

SOME DAYS ARE BORN OF SORROW.

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrows are unknown."

ANONYMOUS.

"Through sorrow's night, and danger's path,
Amid the deepening gloom,
Ye children of a heavenly king
Are marching to the tomb."

H. KIRKE WHITE.

IT is a destiny, that every life be, to a greater or less degree, fraught with that heart-purifying element, which we term sorrow. And who would have it otherwise? Who would glide passively along the bright river of smiles, without one taste of that chiefest of disciplines, sorrow? How grateful should we be to Him who has permitted us to drink of the same cup with his only Son!

for he was a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Who is so blind that will not see the kind designs of our Father, in the disposition of those works of his hands which he pronounced good. Truly His eye is all-seeing; the overflow of his tender mercies toward the children of men are unbounded. What cell of goodness is there within the human heart, of which the breath of sorrow cannot raise the valve? In a word, what countless numbers of souls have been stayed in their mad career, have been saved from eternal destruction, through the chastening rod of the Lord.

It was the morning after the sailing of the Nautilus; the Sea-flower had arisen with the sun, and calling for old Nep, as was her wont, to accompany her on her morning's walk, she tripped lightly along, humming a farewell to the last altheas, as they nodded their shrivelled heads, in view of their departure; but their words of adieu were made brief, by a voice as of one in distress; and coming near, it proved to be the musical Vingo, trilling the wild melodies of his old Virginia days.

"Good morning, Vingo; you must have been

up a long time to have been away down to the shore; you must take it easier, and get more sleep. Even old Nep dislikes to leave his warm kennel this cool morning, for he did not come at my call, and so I would not disturb him."

"Ah, missy, de old fellow am getting along in years as well as de rest ob us; and if it was n't for de gray hairs, dat will keep at de top ob de heap, in spite ob ebery ting, I should feel dat old age am coming wid long strides, when I see dat de wee bud ob de Sea-flower am almost in bloom. But see here, missy," said he, holding up a fresh cod which he had taken, "I 'm tinking dat make massa Harry's eyes sparkle."

It was the hour for family prayers.

"Had you not better go to Harry's room, dear, and see if he is ill this morning? he is unusually late," said Mrs. Grosvenor.

"I tink de fragrance ob de salt water about dat cod fetch him soon," remarked Vingo, endeavoring to smooth his face into a proper state of sobriety.

Gently the Sea-flower tapped at her brother's door, but receiving no answer, she ventured in; the room was in the same order in which she had left

it the day before, for she took great pleasure in arranging the flowers upon his dressing table, and no one could impart such a coziness, arranging everything to his mind, as could Sea-flower. The bed had not been disturbed, and the book from which she had read to him, was lying thereon, opened at those beautiful verses of "The Iris of the Deep," which he loved so well to hear her read. What could it mean? Calmly her breath came and went; but for that she appeared like a beautiful piece of statuary, her eyes turned upward, as if seeking for strength to meet the vague sense of desolation which was creeping into her heart. Upon the table were two notes, one addressed to her mother, the other to herself, in his hand-writing. With nerveless hand she broke the seal; no emotion was visible, save the delicate glow upon her cheek, which came and went, and the playing of the muscles about her compressed lips, as she read the following:

"My Sister — When you read this, I shall be far away, sailing over those glorious billows which you and I love so well! You will miss me, for I know you love your erring brother, with all his faults; and even you, who can realize what

were my heart's desires, will hardly forgive the step which brings such deep grief upon our mother; yet you will think of me with kindness, for I know it cannot be otherwise. There is no spot within your heart of love which is not occupied. Could I have left home with a mother's blessing, I should be happier; but she will pray for her boy; the gentle breeze which fills our sail will bear her "God bless you" to the ear of him who will think of the dear ones at home, until he shall once more fill his place in that dearest of family circles, and thank God, my mother has such an one as you to lean upon. Farewell, dear Sea-flower, until we meet again.

BROTHER HARRY."

He had gone! Could it be possible? How could she speak those cruel words to her mother? Yet it must be. With steady step she entered the drawing-room; the mother looked upon her child. That which she would speak failed to give utterance. Instinctively soul sympathized with soul.

"Mother, we will breathe our morning supplication to Him who ordereth all things;" and the Sea-flower, at that family altar, prayed that strength might be given them, that they might be prepared

for whatever was to be their portion, and her prayer was heard. Arising, Mrs. Grosvenor sank into a chair; with an agitated voice she spoke, —

"My child, some dreadful thing has occurred! My son, — tell me, has he gone? for the same mysterious power which bade me impress upon his mind last night, the value of the instructions, which, I pray God, I have not been unfaithful in setting before him, tells me I shall not see my boy again for many long days! Speak, my child, is it not so?"

"You have spoken too truly, mother; may you be able to bear up under this affliction;" and she put the note into her mother's hand.

"My eyes fail me, my child! If it is not asking of you too much, tell me what were his last words; they will fall more gently on my heart;" and the tones of the Sea-flower were of comfort as she read: —

"My dear Mother — In the ship Nautilus, which will sail from this port on the 20th of October, I have shipped for a Cape Horn voyage. You will hardly believe what you read; nevertheless, it is true. I was very much disappointed that I could not go with father, and thought I

would wait patiently until his return; but gaining permission from my present captain to accompany him, I could not resist the temptation. I know I shall do very wrong in going away without your consent, but forgive me, if you can, mother; 't is the only act in which I have ever given you sorrow, or by which I ever shall. You shall hear from me as often as I can get an opportunity of sending home, and it will not be a great while before I shall be with you again. I shall not forget my prayers night and morning; and I know you will not cease to pray for your son, though he should fall to the lowest depths of degradation. Tell father, when you write him, that I have disobeyed his word; but ask him if he cannot forgive me. It is possible that I may meet with him upon the ocean, and may we both be spared to make you happy, my dear mother. Farewell, from your affectionate son."

"I do forgive you, my son, in this cruel step which you have taken; indeed, but how could he do thus? Oh, how could he!" and Mrs. Grosvenor, overcome with her emotion, sank back in her chair.

"De good Lord be praised, missy! but I not tink it eber come to dis. To be sure, massa

Wendall often tell me, eber since *dat day*, dat I getting too full ob laugh, dat one extreme follow anoder; but I never tink young massa take hesef clean off!" and, wiping the whites of his eyes, he went out to hunt up old Nep to share his grief; but he soon returned, and locking the door after him, proceeded to fasten every window in the house.

Sea-flower, who was bathing her mother's temples, observing what the negro was about, was at a loss to account for his movements; but knowing he disliked to be questioned upon points touching his judgment, she humored him by letting him have his own way, till finally, he peered into his mistress's face, and in a voice scarcely above a whisper, said, "Dar, missy, de rest ob us am safe! he no cotch any more dis time!"

"What is it? Vingo, what has happened?"

"Ah, little missy, if I was n't clean gone tuck! 'pears like I never shall get ober it."

"What is the matter, Vingo?"

"Well, missy Sea-flower, I tinks it am de ebil one dat has taken dem away, after all; for dat dog neber go 'way peaceably wid anyting short ob de debil; he got too much de spirit ob his

massa to be afeard ob anyting dat belong on dis earth!"

"Is Neptune gone, too, Vingo?"

"Yes, missy, dar not eben a shadow left ob him; and, [the negro had a remarkable imagination], 'pears like I see de print ob a cloben tread in de soft ground, by his door; and among de hay de old fellow hab lef some ob his plunder trough mistake."

Sea-flower hastened to the dog's kennel, and there indeed was a small parcel, folded neatly in white paper, but no trace of the dog was to be seen; opening the package, there was a small locket, containing the likeness of her mother and herself, which had been left upon the parlor table, but how it came in the dog's kennel was a mystery.

"Oh, our faithful Neptune! how much we shall miss him! It must be that he has gone with his master; but perhaps it is all for the best."

"I tinks eberyting should be ob de best for you, missy; 'pears like if my poor old Phillis could get used to de tribilations, like you do, it help to make de road easier; but I specks she neber learn how."

"O, Vingo, it makes my heart bleed to think that your people have no opportunities for learning that they may cast their burdens on the Lord. I cannot imagine anything more dreadful than the ignorance in which the slaves are kept."

"Yes, missy, I neber remembers much about it till I leabes old Berginny; some how or oder, I finds out dat old massa's people hab a God, but I neber 'spect he know anyting 'bout poor black man."

Days and months passed on, as the lonely days of sorrow do come, and go, and come again; but as the lengthened shades of the summer solstice had again become less, another cloud had arisen in the firmament of mingled joys and sorrows, threatening to encompass even the bright rays of hope within its gloom.

Mrs. Grosvenor had written her husband of the conduct of their truant son, as Harry had wished, and had in reply received his full forgiveness for the boy. Captain Grosvenor had written that he much regretted not having taken Harry along with him, "for," said he, "a second thought would have convinced me that the boy had too much of the spirit of his father to remain content-

edly on shore; he has but followed in my footsteps, for I never shall forget the night I stole away from my father's house, when I was but ten years old, and went to sea. Yes, tell my boy that I forgive him, yet it annoys me very much that you and our dear Natalie are left alone, my wife; but at the rate we have been doing, it will not be long before we shall be homeward bound."

Nearly a twelvemonth had passed since this letter had been received; not a word had been heard of the Tantalizer for a long time; several ships had returned which had left since she had sailed, but they had brought no tidings of her. Over a year had passed since she was last reported, and her owners began to look doubtful in regard to her fate; and there were rumors that the Tantalizer was counted among the missing vessels, yet no one dared to breathe the thought to the still hoping family, while there was the least possibility that she might be heard from again; and who would wish to be the first to pronounce that gentle wife a widow? Darker and still deeper grew the overshadowing cloud, and the hopes of the trusting ones less. Mrs. Grosvenor would sit for whole days brooding over her

sorrows, clinging to the last ray of hope, with almost the insanity of hope; but the last spark finally went out, never again to be rekindled. The untiring wheels of time still went their rounds, and everything moved on, as if there were no hearts beating in discordant measure to the joyous song of nature. Sympathizing friends pitied the afflicted, and the world read,—"A noble ship lost at sea! all on board supposed to have perished! Ship and cargo valued at thirty thousand dollars; no insurance!" and they exclaim,—"ah, the sailor's life is indeed hard!" But they dwell upon the latter clause of the paragraph with as much real pity, the words fall upon their ear, conveying as much of real sadness to their minds, as that many families have been called to mourn the loss of one of their members. The Sea-flower could hardly become reconciled to the thought that she would never see her father more, yet for her mother's sake she suppressed her grief, endeavoring to soothe her weary spirits by those refreshing promises of Him who dries the mourner's tear,—binding up the wounds of the broken-hearted.

"Dear mother, we are called upon to bear a

heavy trial; this is indeed a bitter, bitter draught, yet we must not forget 't is our Father holds the cup. You have taught me to smile upon his chastening rod, but in this dark hour of trial truly the flesh is weak; yet we will rest upon the strength of His arm, He will not forsake us; and, mother, His ways indeed are higher than our ways. How tenderly has he dealt with us, inasmuch as he has so ordered that our dear Harry should be spared to us; for as I look upon the past, I can see nothing but the kindly interference of his will, that my brother did not share the same grave with his father."

"My darling, your precious words shed light over my weary pathway. I fear that I have sinned in thus murmuring at God's will, for I would not see his loving kindness in sparing to me my boy. But it is so very hard, — so dreadful, — that in that hour when his spirit winged its way to that better land, we might not pause from our worldly pursuits, turning our eyes heavenward, craving strength to bear our cross; but your words of love, my child, remind me of that Being who is the fountain-head of loveliness, and I thank God for his gift of you."

"If I am a comfort to you, mother, it is through your influence, for you have taught me to walk in the paths of virtue."

"True, I have pointed out to you the ways of righteousness, but when you looked upon that bright river of life, I observed that its waters were no less tranquil, and mirrored upon its bosom was one more shining star; and it has been increasing in magnitude, till now its radiance illumes even the bright river itself."

So did the Sea-flower gather together the broken threads of this family, weaving them closer with that golden thread of tender remembrance of him who had gone to await them for a little in that happier home above; this family, of which she had never the slightest suspicion but that they were of her own flesh and blood; and as she sat with her hand clasped within that of her mother's, reading from that blessed book, "Come unto me all ye that are weary," Mrs. Grosvenor could not but notice the striking resemblance which she bore to those lovely features of the miniature, which was found within the golden band. The child was growing to resemble her unknown mother, and were there any who had ever known the parents,

to see their child, they could not but have discovered her descent. As the thought came to Mrs. Grosvenor's mind, she shuddered; and she asked herself if it could ever be that her darling should be torn from her? if another cloud would arise, hiding one more cherished one from her sight? But why should she tremble at the thought? she well knew there could be nothing, not even the discovery of relatives, which could lessen her daughter's love for her mother. Not a word had ever been said to the child in regard to her mysterious parentage. Captain Grosvenor had thought it best not to reveal the fact until she should have become of a suitable age to fully realize her situation. Those who had known the circumstances of her discovery, had gradually come to look upon her as the child of those who treasured her as if she had been their own; and the playmates of her childhood days had never mistrusted there was a mystery hanging about her "romantic" name,—Sea-flower. Harry, indeed, had never forgotten his delight at having a new sister; and as they had grown up together, he had often looked into her dreamy eyes, and thought, "How unlike she is to any one else; she is too good to be my

sister;" and as the reality came to him, he had banished the remembrance, ere it had taken to itself a form. The original Vingo had never lost sight of "that commentful" day, as he termed it; not a day passed but he made some allusion to "dat wee gem among de sea-weeds," and the Sea-flower would open wide her eyes, as from his wild laugh she caught his broken sentences, and would wonder why the negro's words should meet with such a response within her own bosom. The child's dress, together with the ornaments which had been found upon her, had been laid carefully away, reserved until she should have become familiar with her history. But Mrs. Grosvenor, since the loss of her husband, had weighed the question in her mind, whether she should still keep the secret from her, for the child's mind was much beyond her years, and she questioned whether it would be for the best to permit her to grow to maturer years thus undeceived; but she reflected that such had been the design of her husband, and, therefore, for the present, the subject was dismissed from her mind.

It was the close of the third year in which Harry had been from home. Mrs. Grosvenor had

received four letters from him in that time. His last had stated they were doing well, that he was under one of the kindest of captains, and all that was wanting to make him perfectly happy, was to see his dear mother, and the rest of the family once more. Poor boy, he little thought that there was one of its members whom he would never see again, until he had passed over that sea from which no navigator ever returns! Harry had never written his mother of the brutal treatment which he had received from his first captain, but he had said that Neptune had been the means of saving his life, and that the old fellow was getting to be quite a sailor, inasmuch as he could take a turn on the quarter-deck with as much dignity as the captain himself. It had been some time since Harry's last letter had been received, and now Mrs. Grosvenor was anxiously looking for news from him, with a state of mind prepared for receiving almost anything, so fraught with sad events had been the last few years, when one day Vingo was seen far down the street, coaxing his time-wearied limbs into a run, and bursting into the room, he stood panting in the middle of the floor, grinning with delight, and holding at arm's

length a letter, which Mrs. Grosvenor recognized as coming from her son. The Sea-flower read the letter aloud, and when Vingo learned that massa Harry was homeward bound, he could contain himself no longer; it seemed as if he would go beside himself at the thought of having his young massa home once more, for everything had appeared so different since he went away; there had been so many changes, that the fellow had really had his fears that it might be his turn next to be taken off, and he had often had visions of his old slave massa in nearer proximity than was at all consistent with his ideas of liberty.

"De good Lord be praised!" exclaimed the negro, as Sea-flower ceased reading; "dis am too good news for old black man live me! but I knew de bright sunshine not be contented to stay away from missy Sea-flower long. I tinks missy get along better widout him, dan he can widout her; but dar am some poor souls dat neber sees de shine, making dem feel as full ob sing as a camp-meeting!" and the negro gave a deep sigh at the remembrance of his poor old Phillis, who was, for aught he knew, still wearing the accursed yoke of slavery.

"Poor things! poor things!" sighed the Sea-flower; "I would willingly share with them my joys, were it in my power. Theirs would be a lighter burden to those who have learned of that glorious home, where the resplendent shining of its bright ones is forever! But they, alas, have no bright future to look forward to, giving them renewed strength to bear their cross; or if they ever hear of that All-Father who hears the cry of the most wretched of his children, their masters would have them believe that he is but the white man's God! Oh, Vingo, how could you have had the heart to believe that God would disown his children?"

"Dunno, missy; but 'pears like de slabe jus' no more chilen dan de oder animals; and I tinks old massa done teach de hounds about de big bible, sooner dan he niggers."

"What became of your wife, Vingo, when father took you away? Could you not prevail on your master to let her come with you?"

"O, missy, old Bingo hoe in de cotton field great many long years since he sot eyes on poor, torn-down Phillis, or the young-uns."

"The little ones! and had you some children, Vingo?"

"Ah! if I known how to praise de good Lord in dem days, I specks I shouted for joy, when I see de wee creters burstin' wid de laugh; and Phillis, she clean tuck ober, to see them fist each oder wid dar little feet, 'pearing like dey hab inherit all de peruigilinations ob dar daddy; and den de little creters change dar minds, and burst into de smiles again. O, dem was happy days! and I and Phillis tink we just de pleasantest creters in de whole ob Berginny; and we takes de young uns out wid us to de cotton field, and after dey gets use to de hot sun in dar eyes, dey crawl round on de ground, snatchin' up de bits ob cotton, like dey hab been use to it all dar days; and we not mind it much if old oberseer did gib us a lash ober de head, 'casionally, when we stops to cotch a bref, long as we habs de young uns to lift us up a bit. But dem days not stay long, for one day dar come a fierce looking man, from way down in Kentuck, and as he went ober de plantation, I oberhears him saying to massa, dat he must hab just de smartest, good-looking niggars dat could be scared up, for dar was one ob de richest men in Kentuck dat was willing to pay any price for dem; but dey must be made ob de

right material, for he worked his niggars, and cut dem up so, dat he hab to get in a fresh supply ebery now and den. Dat was death-blow to me, for I knew my Phillis was considered de smartest, best looking gal on de plantation; for many a time I hear massa say, dat gal worth a dozen common ones, and he spoke de truth for once, for I knows dar neber was anoder like her. Well, I tells Phillis dat night what I hears, and I tells her to jus slack off a little, and put on her worst look when de man come round next day, and perhaps dey oberlook her; but 'pears like we did n't get much comfort from dat, and all night long we keeps awake, for we could n't help tinking dat might be de last time we eber see each oder again; for we neber hear ob de good place den, where we might meet when slabe massa get trough wid us. De next morning, afore de broke ob day, massa and de trader comes round to our cabin, and seeing Phillis at de door, putting de young uns to rights, and clarin' up a little, 'fore we goes out to de field, de fierce man cracked his whip, and jumping ober de young uns, caught Phillis by de arm, and whirling her round and round, called out, 'I say, mister, dis ere 's de like-

list critter I've sot eyes on dis many a day! I must hab dis one at any price! Old Killall be good-natured a month, when he sees dis handsome critter; but if he do n't use her up in less dan dat time, he 'll do what he neber done afore! I tell you, sar, it 's surprisin' to see how much work he 'll get out ob his niggars; goes ahead ob anyting you eber heard ob; dat 's de way he 's made such a power ob money. He says he 's tried it faithfully, year in and year out, and he 's thoroughly convinced dat de way to make anyting by dis niggar business, is to get de work; if dey wont work widout de whip, why, put it on! get dar steam up some way or oder, and when one lot gibs out, get a fresh stock! I 'll tell you what, sir, Killall understands it; he 'll sell dar hides for shoe leather radder dan let his niggars stand idle!' When I hear dat, missy, my bery blood boil, and 'pears like I could n't keep my hands off from de villain; but I know dat if I make any resistance, it fare all de worse wid Phillis, and I get sent to de whippin'-place, into de bargain; so I only grind my teeth, and look on, like I did n't know any better; but, missy, did n't I wish I white man den, jus' for de

sake ob sabin' my wife and young uns? for I lib wid Phillis so long I could n't help feeling 'tached to her. Ole massa, he not 'pear to like de idea ob parting wid Phillis jus den, for he know right well dat he not get anoder like her bery soon, and so he tells de trader dat de niggar 'pear bery well, but as for de real work, he got a dozen dat go ahead ob her, and if de gemman want de real workin' niggar, dey step round de oder side de plantation; but de trader, he keep his eye on Phillis, like he understand de business too well to be put off dat way, and he say to massa, tell you what 't is, mister, dat gal may not hab de genuine work 'bout her now, but if she get under old Kill-all's lash, dar be no trouble bout dat, and den when she good for notin' else, after de work all out ob her, she might keep a little ob her looks, 'nough to make her go for a hundred or so. But massa, he not like to gib her up, and dey talk a long time togeder, and I hears de trader say, — 'de gal should square off all de old affair, wid five hundred to boot;' till by and by massa gibs in, and de bargain was closed, bery much to de satisfaction ob both parties. But dey not stop to ask how we like de idea ob being separated for life!

dey not tink dat perhaps de mother find it hard to leabe her chil'en. De trader 'pear bery mueh pleased wid his bargain, and he slipped a cord round Phillis's arm, and tell her to go wid him. O, missy, dat was de awfullest minute in my life! Poor Phillis look at de chil'en, den at me, and wid one long, piereing shriek, dat I hear many times since, she clung round my neck, begging me to go wid her, to sabe her from de dreadful place where dey would take her! But afore I could say one word, the trader, wid a dreadful curse, seize her by de throat, and in his hurry to get her away, stumbled ober one ob de young uns wid his great heaby boots, dat was made 'spressly to kick de fractious niggars, as he called it, and de chile neber breathe again! he had step clean on to its neck, strangling it in an instant! At de sight ob her chile, all bleedin', and still, poor Phillis become all quiet, and her eyes were shut, just like good missus, when she find massa Harry take hesef away. Ole massa he 'pear rather sober like, when he find one ob his niggars killed, for he sot a heap on de young uns dat was comin' up, 'cause dey be big enough soon to be ob some 'count; but de trader hand ober fifty dollar bill,

to make de accident good, and took de opportunity to get away, 'fore Phillis come to again; but dey not say anyting to me 'bout my loss, and 'pears like dey could not cober de great break in my heart, wid all de fifty dollar bills in Berginny. Dat was de last time I eber sees my Phillis. I specks by dis time dey hab got de work all out ob her, and I hopes dey hab, missy; for though she neber hear ob dat place where all are made bright, I know she good enough to find de way; but I hopes she not be too full ob shine, coz I fraid I not know her from de white folks."

"I hope you will meet her there, indeed, Vingo; for after such a separation here, how great will be your joy. I feel assured that the poor downtrodden negro will not be in that day forgotten; the dreadful curse which hangs over your race will then be explained, and I fear there will be many called to an account for the wrongs which they have done their fellow-men. But what became of your child, Vingo? Did you not feel grateful that one of your dear ones was spared to you?"

"Ah, missy, I tinks dar no place for gratitude in de slabe's heart; and sometimes I specks I

neber hab a heart, till missy Sea-flower spare me a part ob hers. Well, after Phillis and de young un tuck away, 'pears like I neber look up any more; and if it not for de little Phillis dat was left, I tink I clean gib up. I takes her wid me to de cotton field, and she lay and look at me all day long, so strange like, as if she want to know why we dar all alone; and at night I feed her wid de corn-cake, like her poor mammy used to do, and at eb'ry mouthful she look up in my face, den at de door, to see if its mammy not comin'. After a while I gets a little used to de ache, which I hab since Phillis tuck away, and all de time I not at work in de field, I takes care ob de young un, to keep from hearing dat awful shriek, when one mornin' I wakes up, and de little Phillis nowhar' to be seen, and I 's neber seen her since, missy."

"They could not surely have robbed you of your only comfort! O, how dreadful!"

"Yes, missy; I inquires all round if dey see anyting ob my Phillis, but I gets only a laugh from one, and a curse from anoder; for eben de slabe get so used to de hard treatment ob dar massa, dat dey sometimes show de same spirit towards dar fellows, specially if dey happens to be

clean tuck down wid the 'blue imps,' as dey calls it. At last I asks a poor, broken-down ting, dat hab all her young uns sold away from her only a day or two afore, if she know anyting 'bout my young un, and she tells me dar hab been a sale ob a dozen young uns, on de plantation, and she sees massa, long afore day-broke, pack dem into a wagon, and dey carried off. I knows den it no use to look for her any longer, and de more I grows to look down, 'pears like de more dey laughs at me, and dey calls me 'dat moon-hit niggar.' I gets so stupid after a while, dat massa threatens to sell me way down whar dey works de niggars up; and I gets so, I don't care how much dey whips me, or anyting else, for I tinks I neber be mysef again, when one day massa takes me wid him down to de boats, to fotch de cotton, and I hears de captain ask, what ail dat fellow to look so blue, and massa tells him, I got a notion dat I hab a right to keep my wife and young uns, like I hab de feelin's ob white folks. Den de captain talk wid massa 'bout buyin' me, and I got to be such a torn-down critter, massa glad to let me go for most anyting, for de sake ob gettin' rid ob me. When de bargain struck, my new

masa Grobener claps me on de shoulder, and says, 'now, my man, come wid me, and see if we can't gib a better 'plexion to matters.' Dem was de first kind words I eber hears from de white man, and after dat I springs right up, like de wilted roses missy brought to life de oder day; and when de Sea-flower come to us, I tink she sent to smooth ober de rough places, dat hab been gathering trough de long years ob my life in slabery."

"Yours is a sad history, Vingo, and I am happy if I have helped to make your pathway pleasanter; but do not look upon your life in slavery as having been unprofitably spent, for the very darkness through which you have come, serves to make brighter that glorious light which is now shed o'er your way. Your sad tale has impressed me with renewed gratitude to our Father for his mercies towards me; and while I thank him for the many blessings which I have received from his hand, my heart shall also praise him that with these joys have been mingled,—the purifying light of his chastening love.

CHAPTER VII.

NATALIE.

"If ever angels walked this weary earth
In human likeness, thou wert one of them."

ANONYMOUS.

"'Mid pleasures and palaces, where'er we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there 's no place like home;
A charm from the skies seems to hallow us there
Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere."

MOORE.

"SAMPSON, Mr. Sampson! just step this way, and bring your eye to bear a little to the nothe-nothe-east, and tell me what you make."

"Make, boy, make!" exclaimed Sampson, thrusting a huge piece of pigtail into his already overcharged, capacious mouth, "I suppose you would have me believe that you 'd made the light of some sweet-heart's eyes, outshining even old Sankoty itself."

"Three years ago, do you remember it, Samp-

son, when I was a mere stripling, you took me aside, and pointed out a dim light, away down to the water's edge, and told me I would have seen different days before I made it again? Do you think I can ever forget it? I could tell its light from among a thousand! As I caught its last rays then, it seemed to me the pensive, forgiving smile of my mother, for, as you know, I came away from home without my mother's consent; but I long ago received her forgiveness, and everything will be forgotten in the happiness which we shall enjoy at meeting once more. And my father, he is at home by this time! How surprised they will all be to see me grown almost to be a man! I hope the Sea-flower is the same little fairy still. She will not always be a bud, however; yet the opening flower has greater charms."

"Bless my stars! boy, are you losing your senses?" asked the astonished Sampson, as Harry walked the deck in raptures, talking as fast as his tongue could fly, as it appeared to the old tar, in riddles.

"What's got into your head, boy? I have always taken you to be the most sensible person aboard, but shiver my topsails, if the fellow do n't

talk as if he expected to find old Vineyard Sound turned into a flower garden, with a fairy made fast to every other blossom!"

As Sampson delivered himself of this ludicrous remark, Harry burst into a loud fit of laughter, and handing the tar his glass, he sang out "Sankoty light, ahoy!" which brought all hands on deck in an instant, rubbing open their eyes, (for it was but the second watch in the morning,) to catch sight of the first object visible of their homes.

"Three cheers for old Nantucket, and young Grosvenor!" shouted the captain; and the ready huzza which went up, amid the waving of sundry flannel shirts, old boots, and forsaken tarpaulins, which had been caught up by the unshorn tars, as the sound of their near proximity to home aroused them from the dreamy visions thereof to the vivid realities, were borne over the waters which separated them from thence, deceiving the red-combed heralds of the day into the belief of an early dawn, judging from the signs of recognition which met their approach, as the first tinge of red lit up the eastern sky.

Nobly the good ship Nautilus bore down to the

bar, setting heavily on the water, and the good twenty-five hundred with which she was laden, was no less weighty than the handfuls of silver which danced o'er the minds of the glad sailor boys, as they neared their native shore. None were more light-hearted at the prospect before them than Harry Grosvenor; not that he had become weary of the sailor's life, for he loved the ocean with the same free, wild love as when three years before, it had beckoned his boyish heart to brave its perils; but his joy, as the endeared objects of his home, one by one, welcomed him in his fancy, was unbounded, and he could not realize that he should so soon greet the dear ones who had been the subjects of his most precious thoughts, through the many days which had separated them.

"Well, my boy," said Sampson, as he grasped Harry by the hand, "we 've sailed under a clear sky for the most of the time, and we 've held together about as good as the strongest, but there 's no use in shedding fresh water tears over it, for I 'm thinking this 'll not be your last voyage, and as for me, there 's nothing to hinder my hanging around this little sand-heap a bit longer; and who

knows but we may try it again some day. Who knows? ah, who knows that John Sampson is not lying at this moment at the bottom of the sea? Who is there that cares to know?"

"This, I know, is not your home, Mr. Sampson; but have you not one friend? is there no spot in the wide world which is dear to you? is there not one who will welcome you home?"

"All places are the same to me, and I can truly say, there is not a person on the whole earth that would 'bout ship' to get a look at me. To be sure, I was brought up somehow, till I was able to take myself up, but by whom, or where, is farther back than the story goes; all I know is, I found myself, at six years old, on the top of a London dust heap, taking a survey of the great metropolis. Whether I was left there by the refuse gatherers, to come under the head of starved dogs, or whether I was accidentally dropped by my lawful owner, it do n't make much difference. Well, I shook the dust out of my eyes, and made for the water, and I 've lived on the water for the most part ever since. But there 's one comfort about it, I 've never been troubled with poor relations," added he, jocosely.

"Mr. Sampson, yours is a strange history, and what is stranger still, that you have not, in all your yarns in the forecastle, spun us this one. But have you never, in all your wanderings, met with those whom you can call your friends?"

"A rough old tar like me, I must say, would not be the most inviting craft to interchange signals with, but, thank God, I have found one, in my long life of wanderings who was worthy the name of friend! but she, kind, beautiful lady, is gone;" and the rough tar drew his sleeve across his eyes, and turning toward the island, muttered, — "twelve, yes, fifteen years ago this very month, and I the only one saved! I worked hard, but it was of no use; it was to be. I'd gladly have gone down to have saved her."

"Well, Sampson, I think it is you who are losing your senses now," said Harry, as he listened to his inaudible words; "but you shall not say you have not a friend so long as my craft sails the ocean, for I never shall forget your kindness to me and my faithful old Nep, while exposed to the harsh treatment of our former captain; and depend upon it, you will have made other true friends, when the dear ones at home shall have

heard of your generous conduct. I have one of the best of mothers, Mr. Sampson, and a sister who would make you a better man to look into her heaven-speaking eyes! A likeness of her was among my valuables when I left home, but it has been by some means mislaid."

"A better man, eh? well, there 's room enough for that! I shall have to lie under a close reef, and by the help of my glass, I may get sight of her some day."

The crew of the Nautilus, after having made themselves as tidy as a six months' beard, and a suit of three years' usage would admit, prepared to go ashore. As Harry stepped upon the wharf, he looked among the ships lying at the dock, for the Tantalizer, but not seeing her, he concluded she must have put to sea again, and taking his package upon his shoulder, he whistled for Neptune, and turned his footsteps homeward. How familiar was every object as he tripped along the street! everything appeared the same as when he left, and as he passed the old church, it seemed as if it was but yesterday when he had kneeled upon the door-stone in prayer for those who were sleeping, unconscious of the sorrow which awaited

them. His heart beat wildly as he drew near his home, — so great was his joy that he had not observed that Nep had not accompanied him from the ship. It was evident that he would take the family by surprise, for not even old Vingo was to be seen about the premises. Noiselessly he opened the door, — his mother was sitting with her face from him, engaged with her sewing, and at her feet sat the Sea-flower, so absorbed, reading his last letter, that she was not aware of his presence till he threw his arms about his mother's neck, and sobbed like a child. As he turned to his sister he faltered; what a change had been wrought in her in three years! The child, whose mature mind had not been in accordance with her years, had come to be a fair maiden of sixteen summers! The bud had indeed expanded, till now its unfolding leaves were as new-born rays of love, reminding Earth of Heaven. The Sea-flower saw that her brother hesitated in giving her his usual salutation, and throwing herself into his arms, she said, — "I am the little Sea-flower still, dear Harry; I shall always be the same simple child; but how you have grown, dear brother! I can hardly believe you are the little rogue who used

to hide my pet kitten, because you loved to see the tears come into my eyes, and you would look at me without speaking a word, till I would laugh outright, and break the charm, as you said; and then the tears would come in your own eyes, for fear you had been selfish. But I felt that my tears were not in vain, for I usually found some little stranger among the bright-eyed ones, that looked up to me for protection."

"I knew I should find you the same dear sister as ever! I knew you would always be the same;" and as the vague remembrance that she was of other parentage flashed across his mind, he modestly pressed her hand to his lips, and gazed into her beautiful face in silence.

Harry observed that his mother had lost her cheerful, happy expression, which had given her the youthful look not of her years, and he feared that his conduct had been a source of deeper grief to her than he had supposed; but now that she again looked upon her son, her pale, pensive face was lit up with the smile of contentment, and a heart of thanks was hers that so many blessings were yet her portion.

A noise which strongly reminded Harry of

the rattling of the rigging in a gale of wind, was now heard in the hall, and Vingo presented himself at the door; he looked at Harry, then at his mistress, while the pupil of his eye gave place to its lighter counterpart, and raising both hands, he exclaimed, — "De good Lord be praised! 'pears like I couldn't be any fuller ob laugh if I find old Phillis hersef!" and grasping his master's extended hand, he laughed until it seemed as if the corners of his mouth would meet.

"I 's right glad to see you, young massa, 'deed I is; but where is de old fellow Neptune?"

"Yes, yes, where is the faithful creature?" asked Sea-flower; at our joy in seeing you, we have quite forgotten him."

Just then the dog's well remembered bark was heard at the door, and on opening it, the animal marched in, and laying a little parcel which he had brought in his mouth, upon the floor, he jumped upon the Sea-flower, nearly overpowering her, in his delight frisking from one to the other as if he were mad. Harry was now, for the first time, aware that the dog had not come with him, and examining the parcel which he had brought,

to his no little astonishment he found it was the identical curiously wrought block, which he had found after that dreadful night of the storm. Among the many gifts which he had brought home to his mother and sister, he had forgotten this simple one, and now he remembered that he had not seen it for a long time. Why the dog should have noticed so trifling a thing, was indeed singular. Harry related the circumstances by which he had come in possession of the curiosity, and from the presents of silks, crapes, fruits, etc., which he had brought to the Sea-flower, she turned to the mysterious little curiosity with a greater interest, examining the grotesque figures with a fascination, when accidentally pressing a pearl setting, the box (for such it was discovered to be,) flew open, and revealed to her bewildered gaze — what? good God! is it possible? Neatly lined is the box, and lying therein — a cross! the same which the Sea-flower had wrought with her own hands, and given her father when she saw him last! Carved at the head of the cross are these words, — "You will soon come to me again; then you will never leave us;" the child's last words to her father. O, how did they fall upon her heart

now! It seemed as if he were speaking to her from the skies, and unconsciously she looked upward, as if she might indeed catch the tones of her father's voice, bidding her come away. "We will come," she softly whispered, "we shall soon be with you there;" and turning to her mother, she added,—"it is not far, that better land; we may hear their glad shouts, if we will listen."

Over that cross, emblematic of the Lamb who was slain that we might live, was shed tears from a widow's heart; but those tears were not of mourning for the departed, for through her who was made but a little lower than the angels, those tears had been turned into joy. The child who had ever walked in that narrow way, as if it were the only path in which the children of earth might tread, had taught her bereaved mother, that those precious words from the book of life, which she had ever recognized, but had not strength to cling thereto in the hour of trial, were truly Christ's words of tenderness; she could now smile upon the chastening rod. Those dying words, as it were of him who had gone, were as balm to the heart of Mrs. Grosvenor and the Sea-flower, for what could be more dreadful than that they should

never learn of his last moments? But to Harry, who had been just upon the point of asking for his father, it was as the dark funeral pall to his soul, and he staggered to a chair.

"Where is my father?" he asked, in a hollow voice.

"In Heaven!" was the response of the Sea-flower.

There was silence in that house. Sorrow, which had reigned for a time around that hearth-stone, still lingered, striving to supersede the joy which must go hand in hand with purity; but its icy touch was to be of gentler mien, its cold, cold breath mingling with that of more genial spheres, helping to swell the — "Father, thy will be done." This was a dreadful announcement to Harry, a stroke which he was not prepared to receive; and now did the past come to his remembrance with sickening frenzy. That terrific night! — he had, at the peril of his life, implored that heartless being to listen to the stranger's cry of distress, to stretch out to him the hand of brotherly love; and that cry for help was now sounding in his ear with renewed freshness, for it was from his own loved father!

"Oh, what an undutiful son I have been!" cried Harry; "had I known then what I know now! and yet, the fiend would not have turned a hand, had it been his own father! Thank God, I have his forgiveness for disobeying his last commands! 't is the one great lesson of my life, and should I live a hundred years, I will never deviate from what I think would have been my parent's wishes."

"Natalie!" — the Sea-flower gazed upon that name, the name of her father's choice, — a simple word, but Oh, what volumes did it speak! there seemed to be a very sacredness hanging about the tone. As time sped onward, leaving far behind the past, but not burying it, the sweet, child-like Sea-flower was gradually putting on the gentle, mystic form of Natalie; and though the name had become familiar to other ears, to her its impress was as when she reverently looked upon that cross of Christ, at the foot of which was traced that which she could not but associate therewith. The depth of her dreamy eyes spoke not only of him who had left them, but they told of the soul's instinct in regard to that which was as yet unrevealed.

"Well, massa, I tinks de sun make up he mind to take a look out at us once more," remarked Vingo, as seated astride a wood-horse, he was making vigorous exertions to take the nautical expression from his young master's boots.

"Then you have had rather a dark time of it at home here, have you, Vingo? have been rather lonely?"

"Yes, 'deed it has, massa Harry; I 'fraid sometimes dat I lose my self-complexion entirely, and I tinks you not find so much ob me left, if it not for missy's bright light, dat shine along de way. Dare not anoder like her, massa; but I dunno as dat 's strange, for de stars not come down to bathe in de ocean ebery day."

"You are getting sentimental, Vingo," and an expression of thought stole over Harry's features, and he remained silent, for he could not bring himself to disclose even to Vingo, his knowledge of the mystery in regard to the fair creature who called him brother. He could not bear to think that she was not his sister; and yet, had his memory not served him thus, he must have observed how unlike she was to any member of the family.

"Mother, you have looked very thoughtful for the last few days. I hope that now we are together once more, there is nothing to disturb your happiness," remarked Harry, as the two sat together on the little promenade ground in front of the house, enjoying the beautiful sunset of a summer's evening.

"There is nothing which makes me unhappy now, for although 'we know not what a day may bring forth,' yet I have learned to smile under the most trying dispensations of Providence, knowing that His ways are higher than our ways; but," and her voice was hushed almost to a whisper, "there has been something upon my mind of late, of which I would make you a confidant, my son."

There was a pause, — well did Harry judge of what his mother would speak, and looking into her face, he said, — "Natalie, — she is not my sister by birth, yet I shall ever claim her as such; and I know, should she learn that she was of other parentage to-morrow, she would cling to you, mother, as her dearest earthly friend."

"And for that reason I know she is of noble birth. But tell me, Harry, can it be that you, who was but a child, remember the circumstance?"

"Yes, mother, I can well remember the infant with the gold bands, and the pretty white dress, all wet with salt water; then were my first ideas of innocency."

"She has proved a rich blessing to us, and I do not feel that I can ever part with her; but I have been thinking it was selfish, indeed, in keeping her with us, to deprive her of those advantages which would fit her for filling the station which I can plainly see belongs to her. Not but that she might finish her education at home, for our island can rank among the first in her systems of education, and there are many of our citizens who are recognized by our most literary friends of the continent, as among the first in the arts and sciences; but I think it would be greatly to her advantage to see more of the world, and my purpose is to accept the urgent request of a dear friend residing in Boston, that my daughter should spend some time in her family, where she may receive the same excellent instructions with her own child. Our means have been for the last year or two somewhat curtailed, yet as long as we have enough to be comfortable, we will share with her what she most justly deserves."

"Yes, mother, give my portion to her; I can take care of myself, and you shall not want for anything so long as I can help you. I do not know how we can let her go, but it is for the best. She will learn of this world, and they will learn of another."

As the two had been speaking, they had not observed a light form, reclining under a flowering currant, which only separated them from the object of their conversation. It was a little arbor, formed by a clustering rose, vieing with the flowering currant in fragrance; thither had the Sea-flower repaired, and as the softest rays of a northern sky, at sunset, sank into her soul, mingling with more mellow light than is of southern climes, these words fell upon her ear, — "Natalie, she is not my sister by birth." She paused to hear no more, for she knew the conversation was not designed for her, and noiselessly gliding from the spot, she sought her own room. The crescent moon came forth, and beheld the fair maiden gazing far out over the silver-edged billows, her head resting upon her hand, her golden tresses falling gracefully over her shoulders, while from the deep recesses of her heart there sprung up that

which had ever been, and yet was not, and took to itself a form.

"Good morning, Natalie, did I not know you retired early last night, I should say you look a little unrefreshed. Where are the roses of yesterday? they should not fade in a single night."

"Roses will fade, mother, and there are those which await the genial rays of light before their unfolding," replied Sea-flower; "but I did not retire until quite late last evening, for everything was so beautiful and glad, that I loved to look out upon the night; and such beautiful thoughts came to my mind, that I think I must have fallen asleep, and dreamed; and yet I was awake, for I was conscious of watching the water, as it sparkled in the moonlight. As the waves broke upon the shore, they seemed to be striving, one with another, to see which should venture the nearest, till at last there came one, which lifted its head high above the rest, and as it receded, I saw there was left upon the beach a tiny, shining thing, which resembled many drops of dew. Just then the light clouds separated, and there looked down a star, *so* mild, and presently there came another, equally mild, and the two finally blended into

one, still hovering over the glittering one upon the beach. At last there seemed to be a stream of light connecting one with the other; I looked again, and the tiny thing which was left of the waves, had gone to be with the brighter one beyond the clouds. Presently I looked again, and there were the three, but they were changed. The first star which had appeared, seemed now to be a lovely lady, oh, so gentle! the second was yourself, dear mother, and the shining one which had gone to them, appeared to be myself! The gentle lady took us each by the hand, and when I saw her smile upon you so sweetly, I began to weep, and the lady took me in her arms, and wiped my tears away. I was awakened from my revery by my sobs, for it all appeared so real, and my tears made me happier."

Mrs. Grosvenor listened to her child with astonishment. "It was a most striking dream, indeed, she remarked; but fearing the Sea-flower might notice her surprise, she drew her arm about her, and introduced the subject which for some time past had been uppermost in her mind.

"What do you think of spending a little time away from home, my dear? How should you

like to graduate with Boston honors? to learn the customs of city life?"

"I shall like it much, if it is your wish that I should go, mother; but I know no life will be pleasanter than the happy days which we have spent here in our own quiet home."

"Perhaps you will not always think thus; you may find greater joys in the attractions which are before you, yet, I trust, my child, your affection for your mother will be no less, whatever your circumstances may be."

"Oh, mother, how can that be possible? Do not repeat the words! How can it be that I shall ever love you less?"

"No, my child, it will not be; I wrong you in speaking such thoughts. I cannot bear to part with you, even for a little time, yet I will not gratify my desires at your loss; and in giving you to the care of my most estimable friend, Mrs. Santon, I shall feel that you are under the influence of one of the best of women."

"I shall love her for your sake, but I know I shall miss the dear ones at home so much!"

The time came when the Sea-flower should leave her home, to learn what 't is the world is

made of, and taking an affectionate farewell of the family, (the red bandana of Vingo being counted among the articles of utility,) she was borne lightly over the billows, leaving her island home far, far behind.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOFTLY STEALING — AS THE EVENING VESPER BELL.

"And she was one on whom to fix my heart,
To sit beside me when my thoughts are sad,
And by her tender playfulness impart
Some of her pure joy to me." PERCIVAL.

"Patience and hope, that keep the soul,
Unruffled and serene,
Though floods of grief beneath it roll,
I learn, when calm and pure,
I see the floating water-lily,
Gleam amid shadows dark and chilly.'
CAROLINE MAY.

THE Sea-flower arrived at her new home in safety, — the home of our western friends, the Santons. The continued ill-health of Mrs. Santon had been the chief cause of the return of the family to the east. By a favorable turn of fortune, Mr. Santon had come into possession of nearly double the amount of his former wealth,

and he was now looked upon as one of Boston's most prominent citizens. The selling of western lands, which he had obtained for a mere trifle, had been the chief source of revenue in building up his fortune. The little Winifred, whom we left making merry over the Erin simplicity of Biddy and Patrick, had grown to be a young miss of seventeen. Those black eyes of hers, which had attracted the gaze of the tall western youths for the last time, had in no way lost their brilliancy. Mischief still sat triumphant therein, and not a day passed but some poor uninitiated was brought to test the merits of that gift. Miss Winnie looked upon this removal to more enlightened regions, as a change altogether for the best; for how could such as she, at that age which never comes but once in a lifetime, be content to feed on air, *a la prairie*. She had tired of looking at the same half-dozen raw-boned gallants, and had come to the grand final decision, that her charms should not be wasted thus; and now that she was surrounded by those urbane solicitors, which do mingle with those of more enlargement of brain in fashionable life, they, in turn, began to fear lest those charms might not prove for such as them.

"Mother," asked Winnie, a few days before the arrival of the Sea-flower, "who is this friend whom you have invited to visit us? — that is, I mean to ask, what is she like? I have often heard you speak of your early friend, Mrs. Grosvenor, but you have never seen her daughter, and who knows but she may be, — well, I wont say; but you know Nantucket is but an isolated, out-of-the-way place, where fishermen live, and the society in which she has moved, will probably unfit her for enjoying ours. But she will be with us in a day or two, so we shall have to make the best of it."

"It is many years since I have seen Mrs. Grosvenor; we met when we were both young married ladies, at the house of a friend of mine, in New York, where she was visiting, and I formed an attachment for her then, which has never abated. We have kept ourselves informed of each other's welfare from time to time, and thinking that the daughter might possess the same amiable disposition as her mother, I thought that her presence in our family might be pleasant to us all, besides gaining for her, under your teachers of music and the languages, a finished educa-

tion. As for society in Nantucket, I have never learned of what grade it is; but judging from the appearance of the only person I have ever met from there, I do not consider them far behind the age."

"Well, I hope I shall like her, I am sure; she has a sweet name, — Natalie; perhaps we shall like her, after all. But Nantucket brought to my mind such visions of unrefined oil, that I really began to tremble, lest we might come in closer contact therewith than would be at all agreeable"

"Mrs. Santon received the Sea-flower with a mother's tenderness, but being weary with her journey, Natalie retired early, to dream of those far, low murmurings of the deep, which she had so missed, in lulling her to rest."

"I am so disappointed in her, mother! she is such a gentle, delicate creature! I know I shall love her! And such spiritual eyes! Did you notice when you asked about her mother, what a sweet expression she wore?"

"She is a beautiful creature, and if I mistake not, she has a heart to match; but she does not resemble her mother at all, in features; I think Captain Grosvenor must have been a fine-looking

man;" and Mrs. Santon wore a complacent look, as she thought of the favorable effect which their guest might have upon the mind of her daughter; for owing to frequent ill-health, Mrs. Santon had not been able to be with her child as much as she would have desired, and she feared lest those early traits in her character of impatience, and a proneness to censure others, might grow upon her, under the influence of her father, who was blind to her every fault."

"Ah, ha, miss puss," said Mr. Santon, who had received a most favorable impression of the Sea-flower, "you will have to look out for that fairy-like creature, or even your bewitching charms will be cast in the shade!" and as he spoke he proudly surveyed his idolized daughter, who was indeed to be classed among the first in the brunette style of beauty.

"Oh, never fear for me, father," replied Winnie, taking a satisfied survey of her full-length figure, reflected in a pier-glass; "if Boston forgets Winnie Santon's black eyes, she will be perfectly resigned in gazing into the soul-speaking orbs, which shall usurp her power."

Other days than those which had been spent in

sweet seclusion on Nantucket's peaceful shores, now dawned upon the Sea-flower. Although not a day passed in which she did not sigh for one dear familiar tone from those she loved so well, for her mother's fond embrace, and the free, glad laugh of brother Harry, yet she was happy, excelling in those pursuits which seemed to recognize her touch; and her soft voice, as it were of Italian origin, grew to be "the sunshine of the house." As Biddy often declared, "it was a great saving of canary seed, to have Miss Natalie about the house."

Time glided on apace with the Sea-flower, as each day brought some new task, calling into activity some talent which had been lying in a dormant state, awaiting its time for expanding. Her teacher of music, an Italian by birth, and of great fame in his profession, was in raptures with the progress of his two pupils, and in the extraordinary talent displayed by the Sea-flower, was he perfectly amazed; for not only was her voice of that soft, mellow style, peculiar to the Italian people, but she performed those pieces which had but just been introduced to an American ear, with all that impassioned tenderness peculiar to that nation.

"I believe you be one of my people!" exclaimed the Signor, after listening in breathless attention to a new piece which he had brought for her; her echoing tones died away, and rose again with gentler pathos, softly, and with sweeter tone, to fall again.

Unconsciously her eyes were fixed upon the Signor as he spoke, and her thoughts were carried back, far away; she knew not whither they would take her, but rousing from her reverie, she merely replied, — "I love the peculiar air of your nation, it presents such a striking contrast to our cold, less pathetic style; but do not exclude what Winnie terms 'the productions of the genii's more sensible moments' from my list of favorites, for, as there are hours which are divided into sixty distinct parts, so there are divisions within the human heart, which must live each upon its own native air."

"Natalie, darling, what were you talking with the Signor about? From the few words which I caught, of the human heart, etc., I did not know but the presence of a third person might be agreeably dispensed with;" and it was overtaxing the fringed lids of the mischievous Winnie's

eyes, in adding to their duties the office of sentinel.

"Ah, you rogue, have your critic's ears been listening to my feeble endeavors to repay the Signor for his untiring labors?"

"One can hear your music without listening, for I was deep in thought of the time when I shall come out from under the tyrannical power of instructors, and can do as I like; for my part, I am tired to death of this continual,—'Miss Winifred, this piece must be executed with milder intonations;' or, 'Miss Winifred, that chapter of Spanish must be told with greater fluency.' I have come to dread the very name of Professor, and I never can look out of the window but I see some pale-faced gentleman of the profession approaching, with his badge under his arm; but those edifying ideas all vanished at the first strain of your 'Casta Diva.' If I could produce such an effect, what would I not give;" and the beauty drew her arm around the Sea-flower, and spoke in a lower tone.

"Natalie, you know I shall come out on my eighteenth birthday, and that will be in a very short time; then I can do as I like; but how

can I let all of these charming performances of the celebrated Madam Forresti, whose name is in every mouth, pass without hearing her? I must say, I was completely nonplussed, when young Montague asked me, this morning, what I thought of her! and when I told him I had not heard her as yet, he was perfectly astonished, and said I must hear her this very night!"

"But you did not accept of his invitation, Winnie?"

"How could I resist such a temptation? I have been longing to hear Madam Forresti, and with Mr. Montague for an escort, I do not see the least impropriety in attending. I need not trouble mother about it, for she is so nervous to-day she will not leave her room; and I do not think she can object to my going."

"Oh, Winnie! how could you do so? I know your mother would not wish you to appear in public with Mr. Montague! Not but that he may be worthy of attention, but he is the same as a stranger to us, for your father has known him but a little while, and I noticed that your mother appeared uneasy when he called last, for he has made us frequent visits, on so short an acquaintance."

"You do not surely suppose that my father would introduce any one into his family, who is not a fit associate for his daughter?" retorted Winnie, her face flushing with excitement.

"No, I do not think so; but you would not go without consulting your mother's wishes?"

"And why not? Mother will never be the wiser for it, and I cannot see that she can reasonably object; besides, am I always to be a child? I must some time or other act for myself."

"Dear Winnie, do not talk so! You have one of the best of mothers, and she will not deprive you of any pleasure, unless it is for your own good. But do not be displeased with me for speaking my thoughts, for I love you as a sister, and cannot bear to have you do anything that would not be right."

Winnie was about to give way to those passions which an indulged child invariably possesses, and being naturally of a very sensitive nature, she could not sit easy under those opinions from others, which were in opposition to her own views, and trembling with rage, she turned to the Sea-flower, — but the fire of her eye was subdued, her tongue did not give utterance to the bitter,

cruel words, which would have sounded so strangely upon an ear that had never known such tones! she gave one look at the gentle, submissive face of the Sea-flower, and burst into tears. *Such* tears, from the high-spirited Winnie Santon, was a strange sight. Her proud, rebellious spirit had for once been conquered, and what was not such a lesson worth?

"O, Natalie!" she exclaimed, "how I wish I could be like you! I was just upon the point of saying what I know I should have repented! I am so glad you have come to be with us!"

Nothing more was said about going to hear Madame Forresti, but when evening came, Winnie, after leaving a message with Biddy for Mr. Montague, that she must be excused, sought her mother's room, where she found Sea-flower, who was reading to the invalid, and the rich tones of her voice conveyed far more happiness to her heart, than would have been hers, had she listened to the far-famed songstress, with a conscience speaking of undutifulness. Natalie was reading from the "Christian's Hope," and as she read, ever and anon cast her eye toward Winnie, who appeared unusually thoughtful. The nervous

state, however, of Mrs. Santon would admit of but little excitement, and as Natalie closed her book, and rose to bid her good-night, she observed that she looked unusually happy, and taking her dear children by the hand, she thanked them tenderly for their devoted attention to her, and drawing close to Winnie she whispered in her ear, — "It is such a comfort to me, dear, that you prefer your mother's sick room to more attractive society!" Had she known of the struggle which had been going on in her daughter's heart, through the influence of the gentle one whom she looked upon as a well-loved child, her eye could hardly have been brighter than it was, as her child pressed a kiss upon her forehead, and said, "I shall always love best to be with you mother."

That night Winnie retired with a determination to strive to overcome her sinful ways, and as she heard the voice of the Sea-flower at her evening devotions, (their rooms adjoining,) she spoke aloud, "I will try to be more like her." With this resolve, she fell asleep; but as the rising sun peeped in at her window, there were to be found no traces of her evening resolutions! If any-

thing, mischief looked out upon the new day with renewed earnestness, and Winnie Santon was the same gay, reckless creature as ever.

"Ah, ha, miss puss, so your bow is new strung again, is it?" said Mr. Santon to his daughter, as the door closed upon one of the mustached upper ten, who frequently found their way to the elegant mansion of Mr. Santon.

"'New strung' with an old string, father; if these exquisites are foolish enough to burn their fingers a second time, they must suffer the consequences."

Mr. Santon laughed, and merely said, — "Oh, you cruel beauty!" returning to his paper again; but, seated in the bay-window was one, who could not thus lightly look upon the conduct of the coquettish Winnie, for it was evident she was a sad coquette. Often had Natalie observed her, as she received each admirer with the same bewitching smile, impressing him with the belief that he of all others was the favored one, and he would depart, to return again as early as the rules of propriety would admit, considering the fair one was not yet out.

"Natalie," asked Winnie, as she seated herself

at her embroidery, "why did you not deign to give Mr. Redfield one of your winning smiles? You are so reserved, and take so little notice of the gentlemen, that I shall begin to think your charms are doomed to fade beneath the convent veil."

"I was not aware that I did not receive Mr. Redfield with cordiality."

"Yes, but the absence of that fascinating air, which you know would bring the most unyielding to your feet, is what I am lamenting. Had Mr. Redfield been my only admirer, I should have been jealous of the glances which he cast at you; but I do n't know as there would be any occasion for that, for you, whose heart is made for love, seem to be in no danger at present of losing it."

"I certainly respect the gentlemen who visit us, but as for having a preference for one more than another, I have not; and, Winnie dear, just ask yourself if you ever give one thought to any one of those who deceive themselves by thinking that they, of all others, are preëminent in your regards."

"I must acknowledge that I do not give them a thought, after the door once closes upon them; poor, deluded creatures!"

"But do you think it right to deceive them thus?"

"Natie, darling, if you were not the most romantic creature that ever was, I should call you Miss Matter-of-fact! But really, I don't know as there is anything very criminal in helping such people to open their eyes; they find out, sooner or later, that I am of the opinion, — "there are as good fish in the sea as ever was caught."

The Sea-flower said no more, for she feared her words might be worse than useless; but such are never idle words, and though Winnie appeared to give them little heed, yet many times afterward, in the midst of her gaiety, did she remember the Sea-flower's question, — "is it right to deceive thus?'

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"Eighteen years old to-day! Mother, just eighteen to-day!" shouted Winnie, as she came into the breakfast room, her cheeks vieing with the red of the rose; "how happy I am!" and casting a look of contempt at the hot rolls and coffee, as if such things were hereafter to be classed among the necessities of the past, she went bounding away to find her father. Opening the door of the *boudoir*, she paused; arranged upon the table were her birth-day gifts, and Mr. Santon

had spared no pains to make the collection as rare as possible. In the centre of the table was a set of diamonds for the hair, and as Winnie clasped them about her dark tresses, she laughed outright, exclaiming, — "They are so handsome! papa, I cannot wait for night to come! But what is this?" she asked, drawing from a case a string of pearls, and holding them up to the light. In the centre of the collection was one curiously wrought pearl, so formed as to represent a star, and the sparkling of several diamonds from within, produced a very brilliant effect. Examining it closely, she discovered the initials, "N. G.," wrought upon the setting.

"It is for you, Natalie!" she exclaimed to the Sea-flower, who stood enjoying Winnie's delight. "I thank you, father, for remembering dear Natalie."

"Is it for me?" asked Natalie, hesitating to receive the gift.

"Yes, take it," said Mr. Santon, putting the treasure into her hand; "keep it as a memento of our high esteem for you; and," added he, "I, for one, shall petition, after you have finished your studies, to have you remain with us another

season, that we may then have more of your society."

Natalie expressed her sincere thanks, but the mention of remaining another season brought to her remembrance her mother's last letter, which spoke of her return, and how delighted they would all be to have her in their little home once more.

The long wished-for time, when Winnie should appear in public, as the accomplished Miss Santon, at length arrived. Several hundred cards had been issued for the occasion, and to Winnie's delight but few regrets had been received; "for," said she, "what is the use of doing things by the halves?" Mrs. Santon's health had for the last few days been much improved; so much so, that Winnie had gained from her the promise to fill her station for a part of the evening. The brilliant lights already streamed from every window in the mansion, and the finishing touch, (if such a thing can be said of a lady's toilet,) had been made by Winnie's attendant, much to the satisfaction of all concerned; for although the beauty was willing to submit to all the tortures of hair-dressing, etc., etc., yet before she was quite converted into a

"Parisian belle," she positively declared she would suffer none of those officials to come into her presence again for a month. Surveying herself with an air which would have done credit to a queen, she proceeded to the Sea-flower's apartments, thinking to banter her a little in her endeavors to make perfection perfect; but instead of finding her still in dishabille, she had long ago dismissed her attendant, and was quietly engaged in reading her bible, before she engaged in those scenes of gaiety which had less attractions for her.

"Why, you charming creature!" exclaimed Winnie, "I can't help comparing you to a fairy, preparing for a camp-meeting!" and her wild laugh was heard reëchoing from hall to hall, Natalie smiling at her ludicrous comparison.

"Why do you look at me with such a bewildered gaze, Winnie? Is my simple dress not to your fastidious taste?"

"You could not have found anything more becoming, Natie dear; you will eclipse us all!" and Winnie, taking both her hands in hers, gazed into her face as if spell-bound.

"I have seen some beautiful picture, some-

where," she exclaimed, "which is like you! but where, I cannot tell; and yet, when I look at you, the association is so fresh in my mind! Yes, you will be our evening star."

"Venus is morning star now," said Natalie, glancing at the brilliant dress of Winnie; "yet for all that, she will favor us with her presence this evening."

As the two descended to the boudoir, they were met by Mr. Santon, who, shutting his eyes, exclaimed,—"Bless me! I have looked upon the glorious morning, in the beauty of its freshness, and the gentle evening, so pure, but to see them approaching, hand in hand, is too much for any 'live man!'"

Escorting the fair ones to Mrs. Santon's side, he proudly gazed upon their dazzling beauty,—beauty in its perfection sitting upon each countenance, and yet, such a contrast! Winnie was arrayed in a rich attire of delicate blue, her boddice wrought about with silver threads, representing the light of the crescent moon, her skirt interwoven with numerous lesser lights, as it were, stars of various magnitudes, producing a splendid effect in the flood of gas-light; and the set of dia-

monds bound about her dark tresses, which fell in rich profusion about her finely arched neck, setting off her dark complexion, her cheeks roseate with health, to great advantage; and as she moved among her guests; her tall, slender form, so full of dignity, she was the "observed of all observers." Her winning smile, so dangerous to those gallants in attendance who had never realized the true sense of coquetry, was unusually fascinating, and every one who had been honored by Miss Winnie's notice, pronounced her decidedly the belle of the season; but as they turned to the gentle creature at her side, their thoughts gradually assumed a different cast, — unconsciously the mind wandered to other scenes than are usually of a fashionable evening entertainment. It were absurd to call her a "belle," for the word seemed void of expression.

The Sea-flower wore a simple dress of white blonde, with no other ornament than the band of pearls, which had been the gift of her well-loved friends. The little star, which was formed by the glittering of the diamonds through the delicately-wrought pearl, which being the centre of the collection was worn upon her forehead, sparkling

like tiny drops of dew; and as she glided with unstudied grace among those who sought to know more of her, she gained the name of "the gentle star."

It was yet early in the evening. Sauntering along one of the principal streets were two young men, engaged in conversation. We will listen awhile, for we may be interested.

"Do you go to Santon's to-night, Delwood?" asked the younger of the two, who was far less prepossessing in appearance than his companion.

"Umph, — yes," replied the other, in a more reserved tone. "Do you make one of the number?"

"You do n't know Dick Montague if you think he would miss of such an occasion. Wit and beauty do not hold forth every night. Old Santon has but one daughter, you know."

Mr. Delwood made no reply to these coarse remarks, for nothing could have been in greater contrast, than the refined, gentlemanly nature of Mr. Delwood, to that of young Montague, whom we recognize as the same gentleman (if such young men who wear two faces, putting aside the decorum of intelligent society, for the rude jests and

unrefined manners of other associates, can be called gentlemen,) who had attracted Mrs. Santon's notice by his frequent visits to her daughter. Before proceeding farther, we will give our patient reader a little insight to the history of these two personages, whom we consider of sufficient note in our simple narrative, for inducing us to tear ourselves away, for a little while, from the attractions at Santon Mansion.

Clarence Delwood belonged to one of the most aristocratic families in Boston. He was an only son, upon whom had been bestowed all of those advantages which are to be derived from a princely fortune. At the early age of twenty-two he had graduated at one of the first institutions in Paris, where he had been placed by his haughty, overbearing father, who looked upon things American as low and vulgar. The son had not inherited that proud, unyielding spirit of his father, yet he was like him, inasmuch as he possessed the same dignified, reserved manner, the which, having called forth the startling declaration from manœuvering mothers, and languishing daughters, that "Mr. Clarence Delwood would look farther than Boston for a bride." So they

had folded their gossamer wings with resignation, receiving his polite attentions with pleasure, yet never being able to penetrate the reserve which hung around him. To say that our hero was handsome, would be saying but little, for one often meets with such; but with the almost feminine pensiveness which characterized his manly features, we meet seldom. Tall and commanding in his appearance, his dark, glossy hair, and finely curved mustache, gave a fine effect to his noble countenance, the peculiar light of his eye speaking volumes.

Such was the character of our friend Delwood, whom we shall shortly usher into the presence of Miss Winnie Santon, that we may find what success those penetrating eyes, which grew big with mischief even in a prairie home, shall have in lifting the veil which concealed in a measure the true sentiments of a noble heart from the world at large.

We give our readers an insight to the character of Richard Montague at once, when we say that he was what is commonly termed "a young man about town." By some means, a mystery, even to himself, he had gained a foothold among the

upper classes of society, and by dint of strict observance of the manners of others, he had been thus far enabled to retain his position. What his prospects in regard to pecuniary affairs were, no one was able to say; suffice it, that there had been rumors of an old bachelor uncle, who was much increased in this world's goods, whose trembling hand held the desired treasure over the young man's head; and as this report had not been corrected by Montague, he not being overburdened with many scruples of conscience, it is not surprising that there should have been those, who looked upon him as a desirable match for their dowerless daughters; but he, having realized the desolation which empty pockets can produce, was now living upon the hope that he might build upon his fortune, which never had foundation, by introducing himself among the fair ones of upper-tendom, as a candidate for matrimony. For some time he had had an eye to the well-filled purse of Winnie Santon, and he had looked forward to this night, when she should make her *debut*, with as great interest as had Winnie herself. Could he once get initiated into her good graces, he had no fears for the rest; and he had

already visions of what he was pleased to term, "Old Santon's chest of gold." The attentions with which Winnie had received him, on former occasions, had served in no way to lessen his confidence as to his success, and with this end in view, his steps were bent towards the scene of gaiety. Reasons best known to himself, forbidding him to pass Mr. Delwood, whom he overtook on the way.

"Quite an affair to-night! I'm thinking," remarked Montague, as he observed Delwood's cool indifference, and endeavoring to draw him into conversation, he added, "there 's a young *protégé* of Santon's, staying with his daughter, who, I hear, hails from down east. Nantucket, I believe, perhaps we may get a little information on harpooning!"

"Ah?" said Delwood, mechanically.

"Yes, the boys will have some sport I'm thinking; perhaps some of them may be induced to ship as mate, for a down east voyage! I remember of sailing by Nantucket many years ago, on my return from Liverpool, (he did not add that he had worked his passage) and though some twenty miles distant, we fancied that we got a

whiff of the hump-backs. Our captain was a jolly sort of fellow, and would have us land-lubbers believe that his experienced eye could see half across the ocean, but he found we were too smart for him, when he told us he could see a church-steeple looming up on the island, for of course we knew that such things were not raised there."

Much to Mr. Delwood's relief, they had now arrived at Mr. Santon's residence. As the name of Delwood was announced, all eyes were turned toward him, for his presence was considered a great acquisition to any circle, and many a fair one envied Winnie Santon, as he claimed her hand for the first dance. The Sea-flower stood by Mrs. Santon's side, that she might attend to her least wish, when young Montague, disappointed that he had not been the first to secure the hand of Winnie, in an obsequious manner, solicited the pleasure of Miss Grosvenor's company, to complete the set, but she politely declining the honor, the young man, by the aid of the brass which constituted no small portion of his composition, begged leave to remain by her side, that he might make some few inquiries in regard

to her enchanting home, which place he always had a great desire to visit.

"The islanders I suppose are mostly fishermen, yet," added he, glancing rudely into her face, "there are some persons of intelligence among them, are there not?"

Natalie looked at him for a moment, as if in doubt whether ignorance or some meaner motive had prompted the question, when she remarked, "you evidently have never learned of the great dangers attendant upon a stranger's visit to Nantucket."

"Ah, indeed, I shall be under great obligations for the information," said he, his eyes wide open with curiosity! "pray, what are those dangers?"

"The islanders, as you have imagined, being so unlike the inhabitants of civilized lands, have such a natural propensity for wielding the harpoon, that should a person differing from their kind appear amongst them, they might be liable to capture him, mistaking the object for a new species of land-shark!"

At this piece of information, delivered in such a calm, pleasant manner, the smiles which had been visible on the faces of those who listened,

grew into a hearty laugh, in which the chagrined Montague joined, as being the safest way of retreat, and although piqued by the ludicrous position in which he had been placed, he could not but look with admiration upon the gentle creature, whose pleasant repartee had been in self-defence.

Natalie followed with her eye the graceful form of Winnie, as she threaded her way through the dance, occasionally interchanging a witty remark with her handsome partner, and as he lead her to a seat, Natalie observed to Mrs. Santon, "how beautiful dear Winnie is to-night! I do not know who can help loving her!" So enthusiastic was she in her praises, that she had not observed the two contemplating her, and ere she was aware of their approach, the bewitching Winnie had taken her hand, and presenting Mr. Delwood, she mischievously remarked, "Now, Miss critic, it is for you to perform *a la perfectione*, and depend upon it, you shall be dealt with according to your own measure! for you have not once taken those eyes off from me through the whole course!"

Before Natalie could say a word in her defence, the music had commenced, and ere she had hardly

realized it she had taken Winnie's place by the side of Mr. Delwood. Other eyes than Natalie's had looked upon Winnie with admiration, as she had leaned upon the arm of Delwood, but now, as he led forth "the gentle star," the suppressed murmur of applause must have been apparent to the fair one herself had she not been engaged with other thoughts. For several successive figures it so happened that Natalie was the partner of the reserved Mr. Delwood, who never was known to appear a second time upon the floor, and it also happened, how, or at what moment was a mystery, that the two had sought to dispel fatigue, by the conservatory's soothing influences, whither the eye of Winnie wandered ever and anon, as with Mr. Montague she vied with her competitors in the giddy waltz. Miss Winnie's brain was capable of containing two thoughts at the same time, and no one would have suspected, absorbed as she appeared to be with the attentions of Montague, who was playing the agreeable to the best of his knowledge, that her curiosity was at work, wondering what the subject of the truants, tête-à-tête might be. "They are discussing the rare exotics, sent to us from the South," she thought

within herself, and indeed, what other could interest the cold-hearted Delwood? who, it was thought had never dreamed of love this side of the Atlantic; and as for Natalie, many a private lecture had she received from Winnie, in regard to her indifference toward the gentleman! though those discourses had been invariably of the same termination, "for all that, Natalie, your heart is made for love."

From the first moment that Clarence Delwood had set his eye upon the Sea-flower, an interest which he had never known before had been awakened within him. It may be said that it was a weakness, that he had always looked upon women as mere butterflies, but owing to early circumstances, he having been bereft of his mother in infancy, never having known the blessings of a sister's society, he was not to be condemned for the impressions which a gaudily attired attendant had left upon his mind as he grew up into boyhood. But as he listened to the Sea-flower, as she told him of her home in the sea, of the music of the glorious billows, companions of her childhood, filling the very soul with nature's beauty and sublimity, he looked upon her, as if fearful

she might prove an "Undine," and he would not have been taken by surprise had her spiritual face faded calmly from beneath his gaze, to join her sister nymphs of ocean.

"And you will soon return to your island home?" he asked, as a thought of the warmth with which she had expressed herself to a stranger, bade her pause in her enthusiasm with downcast eye.

"Yes, I shall soon return," she answered joyously, "and yet I shall remember Boston with feelings of pleasure, for I have spent happy hours here."

As she said this, their eyes involuntarily met; a silent spectator would have noted the contrast of the moistened blue, to the deep black of sterner make, but as it was, that contrast was not discovered, each felt that the other was reading the thought, which had but then sprung up within the soul. Natalie withdrew her gaze, while Delwood, stooping to pluck a moss rose-bud from an urn at her feet, placed it within his diamond fastener, and the two retraced their steps to join their friends again. Montague was still at Winnie's side, and though the unusual flush upon Natalie's

cheek was a sad tell-tale of the state of affairs, yet she observed Winnie as she listened with a ready ear to Montague's remarks, and an unpleasant feeling rose in her heart; she could not bear to have her dear friend on such intimate terms with him, whom, as by a natural instinct she shunned.

All things must have an end; and the cheerful lights, which houseless ones had watched as the bright beams fell across the pave, one by one had faded. Formal adieus had been said, kind wishes interchanged, and the last sound of rumbling wheels had died away. Excess of excitement bade the blooming Winnie seek repose, and quiet reigned triumphant at Santon Mansion; yet there was one who seemed to have forgotten that the morning follows so close upon the evening. The Sea-flower had lingered among the last to say adieu, and now, in her own apartment, she had sunk into a chair, the delicate pearls still encircling her sunny tresses, vieing in purity with her fair complexion; her eyes were fixed on vacancy, and she was not aware that the morning was peeping in upon her, till started from her reveries by her own gentle sighs.

And what spell is this that so usurps the calm, usually characteristic of her nature? We have a vague suspicion as to what it may be, yet she is all innocent of the source from which these new feelings have sprung; even the last low words of Delwood, which are still sounding in her ear, do not lead her to mistrust, and we leave her, as the fringed eyelids at last droop in repose, to take a peep at our hero, who is only distant a few squares from the gentle one, who, he feels, as he sits by the gas-light, made pallid by the dawn of day, is all the world to him.

If Delwood possessed the cold heart, of which the world gave him the credit, its fetters had at last yielded to the genial sunshine. Sleep was most remote from him, and pacing his room with a quick tread, he uttered, in a sarcastic tone — "Love! Clarence Delwood in love! Love at first sight! I never would have credited it!" his voice softening, he added — "I feel confident that she of all others, is the only one who could have wrought this change! No, I cannot look upon this as weakness! I must see more of her; she is an angel of purity, too good for such as I. Can she think favorably of me? and what will my

father say, if he learns that his only son will sue for favor in the eyes of — it may be a maiden of low birth! It matters not! Should he disinherit me, I will seek her society! I must love her even though she look upon me coldly. I will see her again this very day!" with these resolves he threw himself upon his couch, if he might get a little rest, before he again went forth into the busy day, with feelings how changed!

Natalie was awakened from her late slumbers, by a kiss from Winnie, whose merry voice made the apartment ring. "So, ho! Miss Natalie," she exclaimed, "you have been holding late revels with the water nymphs by moonlight! and now, when the stronger light of the sun bids us mortals awake, you have made good your retreat, and are enjoying Morpheus's protecting care! but I can guess from whence the smiles came, as you slept! never fear, darling, I'll tell nobody of whom you dreamed!"

"Why, Winnie dear," exclaimed Natalie, endeavoring to free herself from the kisses which that crazy little body was lavishing upon her, "have I slept so late? and what has turned your head so early this morning? I do not know what

will become of us all before the day is ended, if you go on thus." Opening her eyes, she looked about her, endeavoring to collect her senses. Her eye fell upon a bouquet, of the finest, most delicate flowers, in a vase, upon her toilet table; it had evidently been placed there since she had retired, as she did not remember of seeing it before. "You are very kind, Winnie, in being so thoughtful of me," she said, "but where did you get those beautiful varieties? they are not from our conservatory."

"O, you innocent rogue! you think to make me believe you know nothing of them, do you? they certainly came from some one who was thoughtful of your well-being! but come, make yourself look as charming as possible, for there is a friend awaiting us in the drawing room, who it is, I'll not say, for 'haste makes waste,' you know!"

Natalie blushed, for there came at once a rush of thoughts to her mind. She but then remembered the pleasures of last evening. Winnie giving her a knowing look, left her to her own reflections. Banishing all other thoughts from her mind, Natalie kneeled at her morning devotions,

her low voice went up in thanks for the many blessings which were hers, not forgetting to ask for greater favors for her dear mother and brother, whom she expected so soon to meet, in two short weeks, at the time which had been fixed, when she would return to her home.

A simple morning dress of pink delise, edged with white, set off her light figure to a charm; her snowy collar fastened with a cross, and taking a lily of the valley from the mysterious bouquet, she placed it in her hair, and half-hesitating, lest Winnie had been playing off one of her mischievous tricks, she descended to the drawing-room. Seated upon an ottoman, was no other than Clarence Delwood, who arose as she entered, taking her proffered hand with some little embarrassment, which was soon dispelled by the adroit Winnie, who took a seat at the piano, and with a rich full voice sang the last opera. "Your friend, Miss Santon, has an enviable voice," remarked Delwood to Natalie, regarding the lily buds which he recognized as of the bouquet which he had ordered his servant to place in the hands of her attendant, giving no name of the donor.

"Yes, I love to listen to her voice, it is so full

of feeling; she has a peculiar style! The Signor tells me her voice is of great talent."

"I need not ask of your own voice," remarked Delwood, "for your tone betrays you."

"Yes," cried Winnie, who in spite of the music had an ear alive to the conversation, "it is moved and seconded that Miss Grosvenor shall give us a benefit, and if she fails to entertain us with her first attempt, she will lay herself open to be called upon again."

"She may rest assured that your sentiments, however expressed, will be truth in regard to the matter! for you are far from being a flatterer," said Mr. Santon, as entering the apartment he welcomed Mr. Delwood to his house. Natalie chose a simple piece—"The Wanderer's Home," and as the sound of her voice died away, there was not a dry eye in the room. Winnie was the first to break the spell, and smiling away a tear, she exclaimed, "I had forgotten to caution you against too great success in charming your listeners, therefore the *encores* of your audience will not permit you to retire without feeding the flame which you have excited."

"Remember you were not to flatter me," said

Natalie, glancing at Delwood, who was silently contemplating her.

"Flattery or no flattery, you must repeat that to please me," said Mr. Santon, making manifest exertions to clear his throat, and looking for his handkerchief, as if suddenly seized with a cold. The piece was repeated with greater effect, and it was not till Winnie began to rally him that Delwood was aware of his negligence in escorting the fair songstress to a seat. "Pardon me, Miss Grosvenor," he said, "but the first tone of your voice carried me far back, to when I was a child of five or six years. It was in Italy, where my father spent some time, after my mother's death, and it so happened that I was permitted to accompany him to an entertainment given by an Italian lady of note, who, in the course of the evening, favored the company with a song. I was engaged with some sweetmeats as she commenced, but as she proceeded, gradually they fell from my hands, and when she had finished, I had found my way to her side, and clinging to her dress I burst into tears, begging her to take me to that beautiful place again! It is years since I have thought of the circumstance, and I trust you

will pardon my enthusiasm, when I say that your "Wanderer's Home," has produced a similar effect!"

Natalie expressed her thanks for the compliment, with blushing modesty, and as Delwood bade them good morning, after having made arrangements for testing their courage with his iron grays, on the following morning; so long did his eye linger upon her, who had full command of his every thought, that he did not observe miss Winnie, who was trembling lest her fresh supply of mischief should come to an unendurable crisis, before he should depart.

It was soon rumored that the lion had been tamed, that the beautiful Miss Grosvenor had found her way to the heart of Clarence Delwood. Boston beauties sighed, and those who had been unsuccessful in what is sometimes termed "setting their caps," looked on with interest, but none who had seen the favored one, could find it in their hearts to wish her other than a life of joy. And thus time passed on, scarcely a day sped, but Clarence Delwood was seen ascending the steps of Mr. Santon's hospitable mansion. As Winnie expressed herself—"the affair was

coming on bravely;" she had now found for whom Natalie was reserving that heart, which in spite of her caution, would impart to others its only element. The time was also drawing near, when Natalie was to have made glad her mother's heart by her presence. Old Vingo had desired his Massa Harry to write to young Missy, "dat eben de breakers gettin' impatient to see her once more, and dat he walk alone now, on de beach in de moonlight, but he neber 'speck to find anoder Sea-flower."

In a few days the Santon family were to part with Natalie. It was in vain they had urged upon her to remain with them another season, for as much as she had become attached to them all, she longed to see her home once more. Even Winnie failed to keep time with her usually joyous spirits, and there was one to whom this parting was not to be thought of. Mr. Delwood had as yet received no positive assurance, that his unmistakable sentiments towards Natalie were reciprocated, and yet he was confident that she regarded him with no common interest. He had read it in her soul, but he would hear from her own lips if happiness or misery was to be his

through life, and it was with a nervous step that he wended his way on this last evening of her stay in Boston, that he might hear his fate. As he drew near the house, he observed, though early in the evening, but one dim light gleaming from an upper apartment, and as he reached the gate it was fast, and a porter stood within, who, to Delwood's hurried question if all was well, as he threw him a gold-piece, replied in a sad tone — "kind sir, my orders are to receive no one, as my mistress is dying, or you should have admittance at once; but I know that you, of all others, could serve to lighten the blow to my master, and if you take the responsibility, you shall be admitted."

"Leave that with me," he replied, "you shall not be censured, and with assumed calmness of manner, he entered. Noiselessly he opened the outer door, proceeding to the upper drawing-room, which opened to the room of the dying one. Mr. Santon sat with his face buried in his hands, sobbing aloud. Mr. Delwood took him tenderly by the hand, and whispered a few words in his ear, which seemed to rouse him from the dreadful state of mind to which he had yielded. "You

find here a house of mourning," he said, "but your presence is most welcome."

"What can Ido for you in this trying hour?" asked Delwood; "can I be of any assistance?"

"There is nothing to be done but to submit to the will of God," he answered, "and I pray that I may have strength so to do." The door of the chamber of death was opened, and the physician summoned Mr. Santon to his dying wife's bedside. Delwood stood in the door; pale, but not emaciated were the features upon which death had set his seal, her last moment was near, but she had strength and consciousness supported by the Sea-flower, to say a few parting words; with one hand in that of her husband, the other upon the head of her grief-stricken daughter, she said: "farewell, my dearest husband; it is but a little parting; you will meet me there at last." Turning to the Sea-flower, with her hand still upon the head of her daughter, she added, "my child will soon be motherless; through you, she is what I could wish to see her; and when I am gone, will you never lose sight of her? make her to be like yourself!" In a feeble voice she continued, "thank God that we may see heaven upon earth; the gen-

tle spirit is pointing me to my rest;" a slight trembling of her weary frame, and she had gone to be with the "just made perfect;" a smile was upon her features, and they smoothed her limbs as for a night's repose. The father mingled his tears with those of his child, who was all that was left to him. The Sea-flower, leaning upon the arm of him who thought it not unmanly to weep over the scene he had witnessed, retired, leaving the afflicted ones to weep away the anguish in their hearts, ere they might look upon the loving kindness of Him, whose ways are all perfect.

CHAPTER IX.

BEHIND THE CLOUDS THE SUN IS SHINING.

"I am armed with innocence,
Less penetrable than the steel-ribbed coats
That harness round thy warriors."

MADDEN'S THEMISTOCLES.

"That one so formed in mind and charms to grace,
The brightest scenes of life, should have her seat
In the shadow of a cloud; and yet 't is weakness.
The angels watch the good and innocent,
And where they gaze it must be glorious."

MRS. HALE'S "ORMOND GROSVENOR."

My gentle reader will pardon the long stride of time which here intervenes, disclosing nothing of those in whom we feel an interest. Nearly a year of moments had sped since that in which Mrs. Santon had passed away. Winnie had seen her loved mother laid in that narrow, silent house, which is prepared for the dead, and her tears had

watered the green grass which groweth so silently, — upspringing everywhere, even in the lonely places of burial, a fit covering for those who slumber, — emblematical of the life beyond the tomb. The joyous mirth which abode in Winnie's nature had superseded, in a measure, days of deep mourning; yet this first taste of earth's sorrow had left an impress upon her mind never to be erased; and though thoughtless ones perhaps observed no change in her young, elastic spirits, there was one, gentle and youthful, who had been to her as a mother in her bereavement, — the Sea-flower. She could see that the death of a loved one had wrought a good work upon the heart of her friend, as it may with us all, if we will lie passive in the hands of the workman.

It was a disappointment to Natalie that her intention of returning home had been frustrated; yet it was with cheerfulness that she resigned her hopes, when she saw that duty pointed out another way. Mr. Santon, on the sudden death of his wife, which occurred on the very evening before Natalie was to bid them farewell, had himself written a very touching letter to Mrs. Grosvenor, begging, if it were not asking of her too

much, that she would spare her daughter to them a little while longer, as it had been the last wish of Mrs. Santon that their daughter might be with her who had proved such a blessing to them all; and so, in pity for the dear ones of her friend, of whose death she was pained to learn, Mrs. Grosvenor had consented to another year's separation from her child, though it was indeed asking of her a great sacrifice. Old Vingo, who had wondered if his young missy would take him by the hand, as she used, when he heard that another long year must pass before he would see her again, cried like a child; but no one was more disappointed than Harry, who had counted the days for months, when she would come home; but his patience was not to be tested thus. He had visited his sister in Boston, and had received so favorable an impression of city life, or it may be that he had received a more favorable impression of a certain pair of black eyes, which were constantly fixed upon him, when he had accidentally glanced towards a certain young lady, whom, report said, (Mr. Montague being among the foremost to give credit thereto,) was the "greatest catch" in town. Whether it was actually the

lady's beauty in question which had dazzled scores of disengaged young men, or whether they had seen visions of a well-built money-chest, we do not pretend to say; but this much we can perceive, that a beautiful young heiress, left to her own discretion in the choosing of a partner for life, stands in a critical situation, and if these innuendoes refer to Miss Winnie Santon, we are foremost in wishing our young nautical friend success in the great game of hearts, for we can see too much of worth in her character, for her to be thrown away on a worthless dandy, whose money, for the little time that it keeps him company, is his god. Be all this as it may, Harry Grosvenor had found several opportunities for visiting his sister, and upon each visit he was received, not only by the Sea-flower, but by Winnie herself, with a warm welcome.

But Winnie, as we have discovered, has been a sad coquette. Another year, however, has been added to her age since we saw her in society last, and this last year, so different from any other of her sunny life, has brought with it the knowledge and experience of many. Perhaps the Sea-flower's influence, which fortunately she has been

under, may have had its effect upon her character, which is now forming itself; and yet her bewitching smile, which Harry loved to dwell upon, when he had returned to his island home, as second only to his matchless sister's, was very like those which she had bestowed upon many an elated gallant.

Natalie had not failed to notice the seeming pleasure with which her brother had listened to Winnie's brilliant conversation, and she had asked herself if it were possible that Winnie could be so heartless as to impress her brother with erroneous views in regard to her sentiments. She would not believe that she had the heart to do it; and yet, through habit, and a perfect thoughtlessness of the consequences, she might be led to do so.

It was evening, and the two sat folded in each other's arms, gazing at an autumn sunset. Winnie was still in her black habiliments, for it was not quite a year since Mrs. Santon had died. Harry had left them the day before, and had bade them both a warm farewell. Winnie had been silent for some moments, when Natalie remarked, — "What new scheme are you planning now, Winnie? you are very thoughtful to-night."

Winnie roused herself, and blushingly replied, "I do not wonder that you note my thoughtful moments, I am such a gay creature; but, dear Natalie, there are times when even *I* can be serious, though there are few who could credit my words."

"I can believe you, Winnie, for I know you have a good heart; but what can have occurred of sufficient importance to banish those dimples from your cheek? Come, rogue, make me your confidant, or I shall begin to think you are at your old tricks, after all."

"If I did not know your forgiving spirit, I should hesitate to place myself in your power, for fear you might repay me with interest, in making you, and your particular friend Mr. Delwood, the subjects of my merriment."

Natalie looked calmly into her eyes; the truth flashed across her mind at once, and she was about to clasp her in her arms, calling her by the name of sister, when a well-known voice from behind them repeated the name, "Sea-flower," and Mr. Delwood was by her side.

"Where did you learn the name by which I am called in my island home?" asked Natalie.

"Why did you never tell us that you have a name in keeping with your character?" he asked, taking the seat by her side which Winnie, who had retired to hide her blushes, had vacated.

"'T is the name by which my father loved to call me, and I associate it with his sacred memory," she replied; and a tear, which Delwood looked upon as also sacred, fell upon the hand which clasped her's as with reverential fervency.

"Your brother told me of the name," he replied, "and will you permit me to associate with that name all that is of purity? May I not call you by that name? Can you give one thought to him whose very happiness for life is dependent on you?"

There was a pause. Delwood had never until this night, declared to her his love, in so many measured words, which were but coldness in comparison with the love for her which filled his soul. A year ago would have sealed his doom, but that night witnessed another scene. Death had claimed it for his own. The hand which he held was not withdrawn, neither did a simper mark her reply. With eyes meekly turned upward, she answered in a calm, low voice, — "My dear father is in

heaven; if he is looking down, I feel that he will smile upon me, when, with my mother's consent, she shall give me away to you. I have long ago given myself to Christ, and if you recognize him as your Saviour, we will together serve him as dutiful children, praying one for the other that we may not fall."

"I am not like you," he replied; "I can never be as pure as you are; neither am I what the world calls a Christian; but by God's help, I pledge myself to be one of Christ's followers; and of one thing I am confident, I shall never be if I grope my way alone through the world, as I must if I lose you, what I shall be if I have you for a guide!"

"It is enough; you depreciate your own merits," she said, glancing proudly upon him; "go, when I return, and with your own lips ask my mother, if she can find a place in her noblest of women's hearts, for him who is all too worthy of her daughter's love."

He folded her to his heart, and the rich harvest moon had sunk far below the horizon, ere these two kindred spirits had wearied of the glorious night."

Mr. Santon had not felt the utter desolation, after the first overpowering sense of grief had passed, after his wife's death, that he would have felt had he had no one upon whom to have leaned. As it was, his home was not desolate, for he cherished his daughter as the "apple of his eye," and he had come to be like himself again. Happy faces met him as he came in wearied from his duties "on 'change," and he had again assumed his easy, jocose manners. Natalie was still continuing her studies, making unprecedented progress, to the rapturous delight of the Signor; while Winnie enlivened the whole household.

As mistress of the mansion she had new duties to discharge, though they were not so arduous as to deprive her of entertaining the young aspirants to her hand, who if they did not throw themselves at her feet, it was only for the want of an opportunity. And thus was everything going on harmoniously at Santon Mansion, when, to the no little surprise of every one, it was rumored that the wealthy Mr. Santon was about to introduce to his domains a new mistress. No one was more taken by surprise than were Winnie and Natalie. They could hardly credit their senses,

when Mr. Santon congratulated his daughter on the prospect of having a new mother.

Poor Winnie! she tried to smile, and she tried to make one of her most brilliant remarks, as she congratulated her father on his happiness; yet it was not like herself, and Natalie could see, what Mr. Santon in his blindness of joy did not discern, — there was no heart in his daughter's mechanical tones. Winnie had not as yet seen her intended mother-in-law; she might be all that could be desired of one standing in that peculiar relation, and she might be otherwise; it was not that which had quelled the buoyant spirits of the heiress, it was that she shrank from the thought of any one so soon filling her own dear mother's station, and she hid her face in Natalie's golden tresses, as her father left the room, and burst into tears.

"Dear, dear Natalie," she exclaimed, "you will think me so wicked! But I wanted no other mother than you! Though you are younger than myself, I have learned to look up to you, as a valuable bequest left me by my mother, who smiled even in death, when you promised never to forget me. We are happy now; why need a

stranger come among us? Oh, Natalie, I never can part from you!"

"Hush! hush! dear Winnie, you must not think thus! you may come to love your new mother, filling the most sanguine wishes of your father's heart, who would be wretched, if his daughter were not reconciled to her who will stand in the nearest relation to him."

And thus the Sea-flower endeavored to prepare Winnie's mind for receiving her new mother, who would so soon take her place at the head of this once unbroken family, as became a meek and dutiful child; but she did not tell her of the trembling within her own heart, lest this new tie should prove a source of sorrows, sowing her youthful heart with seed which might be productive of bitter among the sweets; neither did she know of the prayers of the innocent maiden, that hers might be a thornless path.

The lady in question, whom Mr. Santon had deemed worthy of his hand, and its consequent honors, was of a family of lower standing than his own as far as much of this world's goods go to give caste; but if, aside from depth of purse, she was his inferior, we have yet to learn. The mar-

riage ceremonies were attended with little display, in deference to Mr. Santon's wishes, and the day at length arrived, when the bride, who resided in a neighboring city, was to be received in her new home.

She came, and congratulations were exchanged between mother and daughter, first impressions were made, and the hour arrived which should liberate each one to the night's repose. Winnie flew to her room; she had seen her whom she was to call "mother," and from the few hours which she had already passed with her, her superior discernment of character had judged of her aright; she never had cause to vary from the opinion which she had from the first formed of her; she choked back the tears, so strange to see within her eyes, and kneeling, she repeated the very first prayer her mother had ever taught her, an exercise which from the example set before her for the last two years, she now never failed to observe. Arising, she endeavored to dispel the mountain of anguish which was creeping into her soul, — in sleep. Poor Winnie! we can pity you; 't is but life's lesson taught.

The impression which Natalie had received of

the second wife of Mr. Santon's choice, though she would not bring herself to realize it, were by no means prepossessing. She had schooled her own, and Winnie's heart to love her under any circumstances, but when she saw with what frigidity she received Winnie's warm welcome, thinking not of the condescension with which she had taken her own hand, her tender heart was pierced as Winnie looked toward her, as if for strength, and she had returned her look with a smile which could not fail to prove to her a ray of sunshine.

Why is it that it is of so frequent occurrence, that a man who has been blessed with peculiar loveliness of character in a wife, if he be called upon to part with her, finds, alas! too late, in a second partner, an extreme opposite? It was thus in Mr. Santon's experience, as he but too soon was obliged to acknowledge to himself, though he would not that others should have a suspicion of the fact; yet it was evident to his nearest friends that he was not the happy man he once was; the few sprinkles of gray, which had reflected honor upon the raven black of his hair, had increased ere the honey-moon was hardly ended.

Early the next morning after the arrival of Mrs. Santon, Winnie was awakened by an attendant, whose sense of propriety were a question, if placed in a balance with that of her new mistress, which were the weightier. The woman apologized for disturbing "her leddy-ship," but the new mistress would like to see Miss Santon in the drawing-room as soon as possible.

"You can go," was Winnie's reply, "and tell Mrs. Santon that at my convenience, I will see her!" but recalling the servant, with her next thought, she added, "merely say to my mother, that I will soon be with her," and hastily making her toilet, she repaired to the drawing-room.

Mrs. Santon was alone, for it was a full hour before the family's usual time for arising. Winnie bade her mother "good morning," and was about to ask if she had rested well in her new home, when she was interrupted by her, and in an imperative tone she said:—

"This may be earlier than you have been accustomed to 'rising, Miss Santon, but my habits for early rising are proverbial, and of course my household will conform to my wishes in regard to matters which you will at once see are for the

best. What I wished to speak with you more particularly about this morning, is in regard to the keys; you will please produce them, as I shall have a thorough overhauling at once, and if I mistake not," said she, glancing at Winnie's neat morning attire, "the sooner the better, for I think those jewelled hands have not troubled themselves much about such things. I wonder that you have not been brought up to something beside killing time!"

"Madam!" vociferated Winnie, her face crimsoned with the insult which she had received, but she paused, though still trembling with rage, her eye had rested on a gentle form, standing within the open door — it was the Sea-flower. With one finger upon her lip, her brow calm as the new day, she gazed upon Winnie, till gaining her eye, unobserved by Mrs. Santon she glided away. Instead of the rage Winnie would have poured forth, she merely said, "I will send you the keys," and left the room. Despatching a servant with the keys, which she had intended to have put into her hands at the earliest opportunity, thereby acknowledging her superior claim at once, she sought Natalie, whom she found seated in the

conservatory, enjoying the Indian summer breeze, which stole softly in among the fragrant plants, which were the particular objects of her care Each knew what was uppermost in the other's mind, but Winnie's heart was too full to speak.

"I have been thinking, Winnie," said the Sea-flower, "how thankful we should be, that we have so many friends to love us. I think I have never realized it until now, and," she spoke in a lower tone, "dear Winnie, should you ever receive other than the kindly treatment to which you have always been accustomed, let it serve to increase your gratitude that you have so many with whom you can trust your affections."

"Yes, Natalie, I will strive to do aright. I will try to do as I think you would have done, but I fear I shall not have your strength. O, it is so hard! if I only had a mother to love me, I could endure anything else!" and her excitable nature getting the better of her, she burst into tears. Natalie threw her arm about her neck, and, her own voice tremulous with the pity which she felt for her, she tried to soothe her spirits; "you shall have a mother! My mother shall be your mother! for are you not to be my sister? and she will

love you as did your own gentle mother! but Mrs. Santon will yet become reconciled to you, for when she finds what a good heart you have, she cannot but treat you with kindness."

At this juncture the door opened, and Mrs. Santon brushed rudely in; "welladay! is this your usual morning's occupation? Miss Grosvenor, I think you should have more wisdom than to be petting a spoiled child! I imagine that I shall have as much as I shall care to undertake, to undo the mischief which is already too apparent. It has been as much as I could do for the last two hours, to get things a little in order; but I suppose I need not look for assistance here," she scornfully said, and turned to leave the room. Winnie had it upon her tongue's end to reply, "My father employs his servants to keep his house in order, and they have never failed to give satisfaction," but biting her lip, the thought died away. Natalie arrested Mrs. Santon's steps, saying, "Winnie and myself will consider it a pleasure to assist you, and whatever we can do at any time for your enjoyment, we shall be most happy to do it." The hard-hearted woman quailed a little, at the Sea-flower's proffered assistance, and

Natalie accompanied her to the upper drawing-room, wondering much what could have given offence to her ideas of a well-regulated house; for under the housekeeper's scrupulous care, everything was kept in the nicest order. Desiring Natalie to assist her in the disposal of some articles, she directed Winnie to find some out-of-the-way place, and to stow away the rubbish which she would find in the next apartment, pointing to the room which had been her mother's, and which Winnie had not permitted any one to disturb, since her death. Everything had been left just as she had left it, even some withered flowers had not been removed, and the book from which she had read, had been left opened at the place her eye had last looked upon. This room had been kept as a place sacred to Winnie's heart, and indeed the very servants passed it by with a blessing on their departed mistress; and it was now with trembling steps that Winnie, hardly realizing what had been said to her, followed in the direction which the cruel woman had pointed. She opened the door, and sank fainting into a chair! In the middle of the floor were the very clothes which her mother had worn, with other articles

thrown together in a pile! her mother's portrait had been removed, and the room was otherwise in disorder. Natalie ran to Winnie's assistance, bathing her temples, and smoothing back her long tresses with tenderness. Just at that moment Mr. Santon entered the room; he looked at his daughter! at the disordered apartment of his buried wife, which he had never held more sacred, and he looked at Mrs. Santon! Without speaking a word he left the room. Poor Winnie! this is indeed life's lesson! but thou art learning to "suffer and be strong."

Had the character of the mother-in-law been in accordance with her exterior, Santon Mansion might still have resounded with joy, for hers was a face by no means forbidding. On the contrary, a stranger would have pronounced her to be decidedly good-looking, considering that she was a woman of nearly fifty years, and those good looks were the secret of Mr. Santon's unfortunate connection with her. From the first, the woman had taken a dislike to Natalie; it seemed as if she was determined to spite her in every way possible. Why she should have felt thus toward her, was certainly unaccountable, as there was no trait

more unlovable than innocency, about her character; but this very gentleness of nature, in contrast with the iciness, seldom found in woman's heart, would, as an unavoidable result, serve to widen the two extremes.

The Sea-flower would, as time advanced, have sought refuge in her own home, from this mist of unrest, which had by degrees spread itself around, but when she had spoken of the thing to Mr. Santon, he had grasped her by the hand, as a drowning man would catch at a straw, saying, if she would not entirely sever the golden thread which was once bound around their home circle, she would defer her departure, for at least, a little time; and she had seen the tear, which was as molten lead, welling up from the strong man's heart. Then she said, "It is my duty! I will remain with you! I feel there is something which bids me stay; some mysterious power controlling my destiny."

"May you have your reward!" was Mr. Santon's reply; and we heartily respond, "May she have her reward!"

Never a word did Mrs. Santon receive from the Sea-flower, in return for her ungenerous treat-

ment of her, other than tones of kindness; and Natalie was happy under this new dispensation, for she said within herself, — "I am but bearing a part of the burden which would crush dear Winnie's heart;" and so she sang and played with her usual glad spirit, gliding about the house with simple dignity, with a cheering word for every one, and, as Biddy said, — "she was an escaped ray of light, too bright for the darkness to hide."

As we may foresee, this very light-heartedness of the Sea-flower only served to incite the ire of Mrs. Santon, who saw that every new indignity which she had cast upon her, was returned with more meekness of spirit. If Natalie had resented such conduct, giving "measure for measure," the stern woman could have borne it better; but as it was, it enraged her, that she could not come within her sphere; and, if the truth were known, her senses were not so steeped in the waters of insensibility, but that in her very heart she felt her great superiority over herself.

"I will put her down, yet!" she said to herself, after another return, through the Sea-flower, of "good for evil." "She shall yet feel my power!

and why Mr. Santon will persist in her staying with us, is more than I can tell. But that is the way with these men! they will get strange notions into their heads, which nobody can account for; even a wife's wishes are looked upon as of little consequence, in comparison with their lordly commands. I should not be surprised at any time if Santon should withhold a favor from me to lavish upon her! But I'm thinking that he will before long find out what I am made of, if he thwarts my wishes. To be sure, his daughter has become attached to her, but what of that? She must learn that she cannot have every whim gratified; she is a spoiled child at best, and will not be likely to improve under her skim-milk discipline. Leave me alone for managing affairs. I've got the staff in my own hands, and all they can do wont make me anything but the Honorable Mr. Santon's lady! though I'm greatly mistaken if he do n't look with evil eyes on the day that made me his bride; but that's not of the slightest consequence, as I used to tell my first husband. Poor fellow! I suppose I was rather hard upon him once in a while; but I knew he was waiting patiently for the day which should

separate us. He little thought he would go first," and the woman laughed aloud, as she thought how she had crept into the good graces of her present husband. "Leave me alone for playing my part," she said, as seated in her own apartment, she listened to the voice of Delwood in the drawing-room. "It is evident that her very life is wrapt up in Mr. Delwood, and it is really quite a pity that so fine a fellow should be deceived; and lest she should follow my illustrious example, I might as well interfere in their arrangements; and if I can see aright, she has talked the enviable heiress into the belief that her brother is a very paragon of perfection, for she knows right well that a good bag of money would be no serious objection to his fishermanship. How they ever raised two such likely looking specimens of humanity down there in the land of whales, is a mystery; but they 'll find they cannot take the precedence with Boston gentry. If I can avail anything, my particular friend Montague shall try his luck in securing that portion of the heiress's estate which I shall be pleased to leave her."

With these plans matured. she ushered herself into Delwood's presence, and in her blandest man-

ner made him welcome, initiating herself as far as possible into his good opinion, which was no difficult task, inasmuch as he had been accustomed to look upon a character so spotless, that he was not prepared for the detestable machinations of one who was not worthy the name of woman. It had been far from the Sea-flower to breathe a suspicion that there was aught amiss in the character of the flattering mistress of Santon Mansion. Her high esteem for Mr. Santon had not permitted her to speak of the sad change, even to her mother.

"My dear," said Mrs. Santon, turning to Natalie, "in the pleasure which we must ever find in Mr. Delwood's society, you have forgotten your engagement with the destitute family, which you have taken under your especial charge, and poor Mrs. Brown's child is so ill, I fear a few hours' delay in taking the necessary restoratives recommended by our physician, may cause the poor thing to suffer; I would despatch an attendant, but I fear there may be some mistake made, and I know your very presence will impart comfort to the poor woman."

"Oh, no, I had not forgotten them," replied

Natalie; "but the physician said any time this afternoon would do, as the little sufferer's disease is about turning, and we must await the result."

"Yes, but I have such an anxiety about them, for in their ignorance they may act contrary to orders, and so be the means of the little fellow's death. It will be a great relief to my mind if you will just step around and look in upon them, as it is but a step, and I know Mr. Delwood will excuse you for a few moments, and I will promise to do my best to supply your absence."

Natalie prepared to depart on this errand of mercy, and Delwood would have taken his hat to accompany her, but Mrs. Santon held him fast by commencing a brisk conversation, from which he could not with politeness take himself away.

"Miss Grosvenor excels in her performance of the latest style, which the Signor has introduced," remarked Mrs. Santon, endeavoring to draw him out, when the Sea-flower had departed.

"I am perfectly amazed at her original rendering of the Italian," replied Delwood, "and I think I can safely say, that among all my sojournings among their people, I have never met with one whose style is more pure than that of Miss Gros-

venor's. I should certainly say that she is of Italian birth, though she tells me that she has never crossed the Atlantic."

"She is evidently captivated with their people, or perhaps I may more properly say, with the only person she has ever met of that nation," said Mrs. Santon, with a mysterious manner.

"To what or whom do you refer?" asked Delwood, in an altered tone of voice.

"Mr. Delwood, I feel that it is my duty to inform you of a matter, which has been a source of no little uneasiness, not only to myself, but to every member of my family; and as you have shown a manifest interest in Miss Grosvenor, it is not well that you should remain in ignorance of what so deeply concerns your welfare."

"Speak! what can it be?" asked Delwood, pale with emotion.

"Do not allow yourself to be thus moved, I pray you; but what I have to say is, that three months ago, we gave the Signor notice that we should require his services no longer, as we had reason to believe his visits were becoming something more than mere professional calls, and to our great consternation, we found that Miss Gros-

venor was not entirely indifferent to his marked attentions. I was the last to believe that Miss Grosvenor could so lose her self-respect and standing, as to look upon a poor professor, who gains his bread by his own exertions, as a favored competitor for her hand, and it was not until I saw with my own eyes, that I could credit what I had heard. I was satisfied in time, that his rapt admiration as he gazed upon her, was something more than enthusiasm that she had excelled even his most ardent expectations; and the expression of her beautiful face, as she concluded, might have been the envy of a greater than the Signor. We dismissed the Signor, but he still continued his visits, under the plea that it was his custom to give a few additional lessons at the close of a course, and if he might be allowed, he should consider it a valuable acquisition to his own musical powers, to continue for a time his exercises under Miss Grosvenor's superior talent."

As Mrs. Santon paused, Delwood, in a state of frenzy, exclaimed, —

"It cannot be! I will never believe that she is false to me, even though she should declare to me with her own lips, that another's claims upon her

affections were paramount to my own! Excuse me, madam, but I think there must be some dreadful misunderstanding in regard to the facts which you have stated. No! I would scorn myself if I had a doubt of her innocence! and if such a thing might be possible, I would die rather than be forced to believe it! I will tell her this very day what I have heard, but I will not degrade myself, or forfeit her trust, by asking her if it can be so!"

"Be calm, my dear friend," said Mrs. Santon; "compose yourself, I pray you, and take my advice in the matter. Say nothing of what you have heard to any one, but come here to-morrow morning at ten, when the Signor will make his appearance, and from a private window, opening from the conservatory, you may, unknown to any one, witness for yourself the truth of what I have said."

"I will follow your advice, inasmuch as I will reveal to no one what I have heard, until I become like myself," said Delwood, endeavoring to compose himself as he heard the light step of the Sea-flower in the hall; and as she entered, he arose to depart, pleading a slight indisposition as an apology for his abruptness.

The calm, spiritual eyes of Natalie looked out upon him, as he walked rapidly down the street, for she could not but notice an estrangement in his manners; but she did not mistrust that an arrow, poisoned by sin in its vilest form, had been aimed at his heart.

The starry heavens of that night told that another day had gone to be with the past, and innocence laid her head upon her pillow and slept, unmindful of plots of guilt, engendered of sin, which might prove for her a draught of bitterness.

At an early hour the following morning, Clarence Delwood bent his steps towards the residence of Mr. Santon. "Come here to-morrow, and you shall see for yourself,"—those words still sounded in his ears, and, as he drew nearer the house, it seemed as if they grew louder and louder, till his brain was nearly distracted. But would he privately watch her ways, whom of all others in the "wide, wide world," he had looked upon as nearest perfection? No, he would not thus debase himself.

It was at a much earlier hour than that which Mrs. Santon had named, that Delwood presented himself. and handsomely feeing the porter who

answered his summons, he asked to see Miss Santon; "and, James," said he, "you need mention my presence to no other member of the family, as my business is strictly private, for Miss Santon's ear alone."

"Yes, sir," replied James, twisting his face into a most knowing wink, as he smiled upon the yellow ore, "I 've been there before."

Winnie soon made her appearance with no little astonishment pictured in her countenance, that Mr. Delwood should have honored them with what she termed "a sunrise call;" and that he should have asked for her in particular, was a matter more mysterious. His manners, so unlike himself, served to check at once her flow of spirits, which, in spite of the weight of oppression which had marked the last year, would find vent, if not in a witty remark, in the expression of her speaking countenance was it visible; but she was not slow to discern that some serious subject was upon his mind, and became serious also.

In a few words he informed her of what he had learned from Mrs. Santon the day previous, but what was his astonishment to find her totally ig-

norant of the circumstances, not hesitating to declare the whole a base falsehood.

"I had not a doubt of the falsity of the report," said Delwood; "but what can have given rise to such a statement? Surely, your mother would not wish to injure my feelings, by repeating what may have originated, without foundation, among the servants, and which she could not have herself credited!"

Winnie saw the truth at once, knowing as she did the character of her, whom, if she had ever looked upon as a mother, must from this moment forfeit every claim upon her feelings, unless it were that of utter contempt.

"Mr. Delwood," said she, raising herself to her full height, her slender fingers clenched together, every nerve 'roused to action,—"if you would not insult me, never again call the woman who has had the heart to cast such a slur upon the character of her whom we know is innocent, *my mother!* It is not to injure your feelings that she has invented such a vile scheme, but it is by injuring Natalie's character in your eyes, she may banish from her heart all future happiness. Nay, do not start at such a strange declaration from

my lips; you are the only person, out of my father's household, who has a suspicion that our happiness is not what it once was; but since it has come to this, I will, at the risk of disclosing to the world what it were wisdom to conceal, establish the innocent; and rest assured that what I say is true, — this originated not among the servants, for there is not one but would kneel and kiss the very ground upon which our dear Seaflower treads."

Delwood was thunderstruck.

"Indeed, I never could have mistrusted Mrs. Santon's character was so vile!" said he; "but I can sooner believe this than that darkness is born of light. And has Miss Grosvenor suffered the ill-will of this cruel, cruel woman, and never lisped a word but should lead others to respect her? Noble girl that she is! thrice noble have these very evil designings proved her! 'T is useless for intrigue to cope with purity."

"And she bade you come and see for yourself. What meaning is there in that?" asked Winnie; for surely such an act would go to prove her innocence."

"If Mrs. Santon can stoop to the deed, which

fortunately has been disclosed in time to prevent the affair from coming to Miss Grosvenor's knowledge, she would not hesitate to do a meaner thing, favorable to the furtherance of her plans; and it is my opinion there is more to be learned in regard to this matter. I will foil her by following her own advice, and at the appointed hour will station myself as desired, not as a spy upon her ways, but that I may sift this affair to the bottom."

Accordingly, at the hour which Mrs. Santon had mentioned, Mr. Delwood's summons were answered by the mistress of the mansion in person, who smilingly drew him to the conservatory, which overlooked the drawing-room, where he could, unobserved by any one, notice every movement of her whose very being was dearer than his own. Natalie was performing his favorite air, and as he listened, he gradually lost sight of the object of his visit, — engulfed in the ocean of bliss which her impassioned tones had spread before him, when he was recalled to a sense of outward circumstances by the voice of the Signor, who, as the bird-like trill of her voice died away, sprang to his feet, and in a voice hoarse with

passion, exclaimed, — "Never!" and was about to leave the house, when Delwood intercepted him in the hall, and taking him by the collar, demanded to know the cause of his strange conduct. The Signor, in his peculiar dialect, replied, "Do not detain me, sir! it were far better that none should ever know of the temptation which well-nigh made me a villain!"

"You do not leave this house, sir, until you disclose to me what may concern my welfare! And do not, I pray you, sir, force me to treat you as other than a gentleman, for if I mistake not, you are yet worthy of respect."

"You do me proud, sir; but I would much prefer to keep my own tongue; for should it come to the ear of madam that her secret is a secret no longer, I fear it may prove an injury to my professional duties."

"Remember that I have said, sir, you do not leave this house until you have given me an account of your strange conduct; but in doing thus, if I find you undeserving of censure, it shall be no sacrifice to your reputation. I will pledge myself that you lose nothing."

"Since you are determined, sir, I will make a

clean breast of it," said the Signor, dashing several pieces of gold upon the floor, — "there, sir, is indeed the root of all evil! that gold was placed in my hands by a woman, who would make me a tool for the carrying out of designs, which I have not the heart to perform."

"Well."

"Madam, for some cause, has an under current of thought, which does not appear to be in keeping with the more open sentiments of this family; for that amount of gold she connived with me to express such sentiments toward Miss Grosvenor, as should fire you with a belief of her inconstancy, and an attachment for myself. It was some time before I could be bought with gold, but she, doubling the amount, I at last yielded to what, thank God, I have not had strength to perform. Had it been other than Miss Grosvenor whom I was to injure, I tremble for my weakness in resisting so great a temptation; but she reminds me too strongly of the tear which I have seen in my mother's eye, when she prayed for her baby boy. No, sir, thrice that paltry amount should not tempt me now to such degradation!"

"You have done well, sir," said Delwood,

calmly, as he placed double the amount of Mrs. Santon's bribe in the Signor's hand; "you have done well, sir; and mark my words, — gold can never relieve a guilty conscience! Go, sir, and see that you lisp not a syllable of this to any one."

Mr. Delwood was about to take his leave, when he was met by Winnie, who tripped lightly in, fresh from a morning walk. He grasped her hand and pressed it to his lips, saying, — "You have helped to do away with the sinful impressions which did their best to fasten themselves upon me. You will never be forgotten by me, and I know you will do your best to protect *her* from the wiles of this hard-hearted woman, of whose deeds the world shall through me be none the wiser."

"I should be iron-hearted, did I not strive to make her happy; for it is in pity for my father and his motherless child, that she consents to be separated from her own loved family."

Mrs. Santon had never the impudence to inquire in what way this matter terminated, but she could see that her machinations had been foiled, as day after day brought Mr. Delwood a welcome visitor to the house; yet this defeat did

not subdue her bitter feelings towards the Sea-flower; they only slumbered, to break out afresh on the first occasion that might present. Natalie had observed the Signor's abrupt departure; she knew that something must be amiss, and questioning Winnie in the matter, she disclosed to her what never came to the ear of Mr. Santon.

"I forgive her," said the Sea-flower, "and I can pity her; for perhaps she has never had dear friends who might teach her how to love."

CHAPTER X.

THE MADONNA AND CHILD.

"Pure and undimmed, thy angel smile
Is mirrored on my dreams,
Like evening's sunset girded isle,
Upon her shadowed streams;
And o'er my thoughts thy vision floats,
Like melody of spring-bird notes,
When the blue halcyon gently laves
His plumage in the flashing waves.'

PARK BENJAMIN.

"PLEASE, miss, a letter for you," said the post-boy, handing Natalie a letter, which she was not long in discovering, was from her dear mother.

"I thank you, most heartily," said she, in her low, musical voice, which caused the youthful sprig of Uncle Sam's department to leave incomplete the angle of forty-five degrees, which he had been in the habit of considering as of no little im-

portance in the perfecting of his duties, as he went his daily rounds.

"Zounds!" said he to himself, as he went whistling up the street, "if I do n't hope they 'll send down another document to her soon!" and his eyes wandered up to the little patch of blue sky which was to be seen between the tops of brick walls.

The Sea-flower perused the letter, and sat, apparently buried in deep thought.

"Why, Natie, darling," exclaimed Winnie, as she came bounding into the room, "what has given you such a wise look this morning? A letter, eh? good news, I trust; far be the day which shall bring to you aught but happiness."

"Thank you, thank you, Winnie, for your good wishes; but I cannot well conceive of any other than pleasure coming from my gentle mother's pen."

Winnie ran her fingers lightly over the keys of the piano, and Natalie did not suspect, as she listened to her sprightly air, that there was a bright tear glistening in her eye at the holy name of—mother.

"But you are unusually thoughtful to-day, Na-

talie," said Winnie, running her taper fingers through the sunny tresses of her friend, "did I not know it were an impossibility, I should say you had lost your best friend;" and putting her dimpled mouth close to her ear, she whispered some mysterious words so softly,— so very softly, that were we disposed to turn listener, we could only have distinguished that one word, — "Delwood;" but we might have seen the delicate tinge of pink, which, tell-tale like, overspread the face and neck of the Sea-flower. Be that as it may, there was a thoughtful look lingering about those expressive features, which could even be traced, when at night-fall, a well-known step was heard, echoing with no unpleasant sound along the corridor, and a hand, which, though of feminine delicacy, could have been fired with sufficient nerve to have wielded a giant's weapon, at the invader who should come between him and the gentle being, whose hand was not withdrawn as he held it reverently within his own.

"Ah, Miss Sea-flower," said Delwood, as he gazed deep into her eyes, "you are far away among the invisible sprites of ocean to-night, are you? not one thought for us poor unfortunates, who are

so ungenial to those translucent ones, as never to have been initiated to their fairy haunts. Really, I must get up a little smile at your expense, for you could not better please an artist, in the composing of your features, if you were sitting for your picture. By the way, have you seen the famous Madonna, whose great beauty is the theme of all conversation? I am told it is a master-piece, by some gentleman who appears not anxious that his brilliant artistical powers shall be published, as his name never accompanies his works, and the piece in question was but by accident, brought to public view. It hangs, among others, in his fine gallery of paintings, and is hung with a heavy drapery of black, which was by chance removed by a gentleman, a friend of mine, who offered a handsome fortune at once for the prize; but his rich offer was declined by the owner, who, to the gentleman's earnest desire that he might become its possessor, replied, — 'sir, that bit of inanimate canvas is all upon which my weary life feeds! were you to offer me the wealth of the world, I would not part with that one small picture! neither can I be wrought upon to produce a copy of the same, without violating

feelings which are sacred.' Whether this is a fancy piece, or if it bears the semblance of some one of his kindred, my friend did not inform me, as he said his very tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, as the sad artist spoke those few deep-toned words. I have not myself seen this wonder, and whether I might be thus warm in my praises is a question, as you know I am insensible to female beauty, if I may judge by remarks which from time to time have come to my ear, in past years, from estimable mothers, whose beautiful daughters ought to have called forth my glowing sentiments; 'but that which is wanting cannot be numbered,'" said he, stealing an arch glance at Natalie.

"I have not seen this painting," replied Natalie, her countenance lighting up with a new thought, "but I have several times visited the artist's rooms, though I have never been so fortunate as to get sight of the mysterious connoisseur. Those who have met him, describe him as being a middle-aged gentleman, of foreign birth, very marked in his polite, graceful manners; yet there appears to be a great mystery hanging about him, and some have ventured to remark that his is no

common history, that he is not merely what he pretends, — an obscure artist! there is that about his bearing which denotes high birth. I have admired his talent displayed, and must see this remarkable production; for you know I am a great admirer of female beauty."

That night, Natalie mused over the events of the day, — the contents of the letter which she had received, were first in her mind. Her mother had expressed an earnest desire to see her child once more; among other things, she had briefly made mention of a matter in regard to their pecuniary affairs, — quite a little sum of the comfortable fortune which Capt. Grosvenor had, by dint of the many perils at sea, accumulated, had been lost in a recent bank failure; — a failure, as Mrs. Grosvenor stated, which had proved a source of poverty to many a family, upon their little island; many a widow had been obliged to part with the last dollar, which had been earned by the seafaring husband, who had never returned to share the benefit of his labors; Their whole community had been more or less affected by this failure. As to Mrs. Grosvenor's own loss, she had said it was not heavy, or, at least, she had

spoken of it as not resting heavily upon her spirits; why then should the Sea-flower's thoughts dwell thus upon the matter? — she still mused — "I fear this may have been a heavier loss, than the gentle words, so characteristic of my mother's tenderness for me, may imply! she would not, if it were in her power to prevent, have me feel that I must curtail my expenses in the least, and I know that my necessary expenses here, must be a great tax upon her income; to be sure Harry has often said, that our dear mother shall never know what it is to want; but for all that, I feel that I might do something to repay my mother for all that she has done for me. Yes! it is my duty! and it certainly would be a duty of pleasure, if I could do anything to assist her." This it was, which had caused the thoughtful expression of the Sea-flower; this which had called forth the ever ready wit of Miss Winnie — had detained Delwood's gaze! But what would be the sentiment of uppertendom, when it should be rumored that the beautiful young creature, of the proud Clarence Delwood's choice, had stooped so low, as to maintain herself by her own hands? How would Mr. Delwood himself receive such an

announcement? such thoughts did not occur to the mind of the noble hearted girl; her every thought and act were of good, and she did not for once think, that there were those, who could sneer at good motives. Ah! Natalie, this is a cold, unfeeling world, at best! as experience of long years doth confirm. Thy little day hath not yet taught thee, that the world is born of sin, for thou only lookest on the human face as divine. How Natalie was to render assistance to her mother, by relieving her of any incumbrance, of which she, herself, might be the cause, had not yet been matured, until Delwood had spoken of the popular picture-gallery, of the unknown artist; when as we have said, her face was lit up with a new thought. "I will seek this gentleman, and it may be that he can be induced to bring out the dormant powers, which I am persuaded are in existence; for my love for his department of the fine arts, knows no bounds! To-morrow I will visit him. This veil of mystery would seem a barrier, yet perhaps it is of sadness, and I can conceive that such are of the tender hearted, — alive to another's wants."

"Want!" she repeated aloud; it sounded

strangely upon her ear; and indeed, we cannot couple the thought with such as she! Can such fair ones of earth, meet with the chilling breath of adversity? Yes, we may meet with them in our wanderings! Let us deal with them tenderly; for it may be one of heaven's sensitive flowers. Stranger still would that word have sounded to Mrs. Grosvenor and her son, in connection with their Sea-flower, yet it was remotest from their minds, that such thoughts would find their way to her heart. Mrs. Grosvenor's circumstances were indeed more embarrassed than she had expressed to Natalie, yet she had sufficient left, wherewith they might by retrenching a little, live very comfortably. Accordingly, that Natalie might not feel this change, she had dismissed her only servant (if we may do honor to old Vingo, by dubbing him with a more elevated appellation), making some other restrictions in her domestic affairs, for the sake of the child, whom she knew was not her own by kindred, doing away with what she persuaded herself were but unnecessary indulgences. Faithful mother! thou wilt have thy reward.

Natalie arose the next morning, refreshed by the sweet repose which innocence only knows,

and although the day was ushered in with clouds, and an occasional rain-drop, she proceeded to put into execution the plans of yesterday; she had made no one a confidant of her designs, not even Winnie; and when that little lady met her in the hall, all armed and equipped as the weather directed, she exclaimed,—"where now? Miss Snowwreath! are you going to temper your indissolvable charms to an April shower? or is it to hunt up some poor little refugee; who is so unfortunate as to be minus an umbrella, that you are so bereft of your senses, as to venture out, afoot and alone, this disagreeable morning?"

"Neither the one, nor yet the other, my fair sister," joyously replied the Sea-flower, and she tripped down the steps, smiling upon the little frightened rain-drops, which fell lightly upon her, from the skies, not offering to treat them with such indecorum, as the spreading of her umbrella, and when Winnie called to her to come back, or if she would venture forth, to take the carriage, she was far out of hearing. Arrived at her point of *destination*, Natalie was so lost in admiration of the noble illustrations of the infinite mind of man, that she had lost sight of her object, in visiting

the unknown artist, until she was awakened from her revery, by a voice near her, and looking 'round, she discovered a poor, dejected looking old negro woman, kneeling with her hands clasped together, and her eyes fixed upon — Natalie followed in the direction — it must be the beautiful Madonna! of which she had heard. Involuntarily she assumed the position of the negress! What visions filled her soul! flitting to and fro. The past, the present, and the future rushed in mingled indistinctness through her mind! and over the chaos there floated a calm, which gradually took the form of recollections which now caused her heart to beat loudly with the uncertainty, fraught with reality. *That night!* came fresh again to her memory, when she had overheard her brother's words, — "she is not my sister by birth!" The same holy passions filled her soul, and she gazed upon that face, the semblance of which, she had many a time, ere now, looked upon in dreams! might they not have been waking dreams?

"God grant dat such as she, neber know what it am to be torn from her childer!" groaned the black woman, with a deep-drawn sigh.

"Ah, my poor woman," said Natalie, her eyes still fixed upon that spiritual face, "I trust such has never been your lot."

"Bress you! missy, dem is de only kind words I hear dis many a day, since dey take me way from my poor ole man, and de young uns! but I's not sure now but you's de spirit ob dat pure cretur, (pointing to the Madonna) dat's speakin a few words, jus to cheer me like."

"And where are your children now? and your poor old man?"

"O! missy," said the woman, drawing a parcel from her bosom, carefully unfolding it, and holding a large red handkerchief up to view,— "if I tinks I eber find de mate to dat, I 'specks I die wid de joy! but it am a long story, missy, it begins way back, a long fore your sweet eyes see de light ob dis wicked world."

"Do not call it a wicked world; it is a beautiful world, which God has given us to live in!"

"Ah, missy, if oder white folks like you, I 'specks it be jus no world at all; it be all one great heaben!"

"But what is this mark upon the handkerchief?" asked Natalie, for she had seen a fac-

simile of the little device, upon old Vingo's bandanna, which he used to lend her when she was a child, and she had handled it so carefully, because he had told her that it was the most valuable thing he owned in the world, beside his Bible, and she had looked up into his face, with her great blue eyes, and asked him what the two little crooked marks were made to represent; and he had told her they were to represent himself and his poor Phillis, for they were bent with the sorrows of the world; and now, here were the same crooked marks, wrought upon the corner of this black woman's handkerchief, which she seemed to treasure so much! What could it mean? Natalie looked upon it in astonishment.

"Where did you get this?" she asked.

"My poor ole man gabe it to me, de last time I sees him, and he takes anoder like it, and say, 'Phillis, we will keep dem; dey 's not quite as 'spressive as de garultypes ob missus's, but when you sees dat, you may know dat old Bingo am tinking ob you."

"And do you ever think to meet him again?" asked Natalie, without betraying her emotion at such a discovery.

"Oh, missy, if he know anyting about heaven, I might 'speck to meet him dar; but we not know anyting 'bout dat good place den, and I 'specks he am clean used up by dis time; clean gone, widout eber hearin' ob de good Lor'!"

"And your children, — you have never forgotten them?"

"No, missy, I neber forgets dem, and though dey brack as dar mammy, I lub dem as much as dat pure creter dar; and I takes dem in my arms, and press dem to my heart de same, but I rudder be called to part wid dem, dan dat such as she hab to gib up her chilen, for 'pears like I can bear it better, cause I 's brack."

"My good woman, you have a forgiving spirit for your oppressors, and, thank God, I have it in my power to make two of my fellow mortals happy. What should you say, if I were to tell you where you may find your husband?"

The woman looked at her, without speaking a word.

"Your husband is alive and well; and faithful old Vingo is at this moment in my mother's family, where his wants, spiritual and temporal, are cared for; and he has often told me, if he could

but once again see his wife, Phillis, he should die happy.

The woman gave one long, piercing cry, and sank upon the floor. At this instant the artist issued from an adjoining apartment, and stood gazing upon the scene.

"My God! what do I see?" exclaimed the gentleman, in a voice which instantly riveted the Sea-flower's attention upon him.

"Tell me! in mercy tell me who thou art!" and he leaned against a column for support.

Had Natalie been heir to that weakness which is somewhat characteristic of the gentler sex, she might have been terrified at such deep, impassioned language from a perfect stranger, trembling with the certainty that she stood face to face with a lunatic; but no such fear was hers. Advancing, she bowed low, in honor to his superior age, saying, "pardon me, if I am an intruder here; yet, sir, an apology is needless, for who can resist the grace and beauty which is here displayed? My presence, sir, has evidently disturbed you, and if you will permit me to ask one question, I will retire; — the Madonna, that face of an angel, is she the pure production of your own soul, or can

it be that such as she has indeed been amongst us?"

"She has been, and has passed away! — has passed away," he repeated to himself; "I never thought to meet her again until the dark river had been crossed! but what do I see?" and he passed his hand over his eyes, as if to assure himself that he were not dreaming.

No, it was no dream; a gentle, living form stood before him who had sorrowed for his only child nearly twenty long years, and was devoutly regarding those inanimate features to which his soul had clung, as if it were of life; and his eye now wandered from the animate to the inanimate, — the beauteous countenance of the Madonna. It was not unlike that of the Sea-flower; the features were the same. Regaining his composure, the artist proceeded, in a peculiarly mellow tone of voice —

"Dear lady, you will pardon my seemingly ill-mannered reception of you, I know, when you have heard what has never yet passed my lips to any mortal! Near twenty years have expired since I left my cherished home, on the other side of the Atlantic, and came to America. I met

with sorrow at an early age; the young wife of my choice was taken from me, and I should have been overwhelmed with grief, had not the precious boon left to me by her, claimed my heart-felt love; the beautiful babe smiled upon me, and I felt rebuked in spirit that I should thus murmur at God's will, when in his loving kindness he had spared to me this, her very likeness, and I came to smile again. I could then smile upon his chastening rod, but," — and a deep shudder thrilled his frame, "I have since been led to ask myself if there is a God! O! can a good God thus afflict his children?"

"Pause, sir, I beseech you, ere you give utterance to such dreadful thoughts! Think of the countless mercies which you have received at his hand, — weigh them well in a balance with your sorrows, whatever they may have been, and you will find the measure of your blessings tenfold."

"Your words are as balm to my calloused heart; yet listen to me, and judge if my cruel fate would not engender a dark distrust in a purer heart than mine. My child grew in strength and beauty, — grew to be like her who had left us; she was the pride of my luxuriant home, the

main spring of my life! Yes, I could realize it then, while I could yet gaze upon her face and dream of heaven; but other days drew near. It was in her twentieth year when my Natalie knelt before the altar — a bride. She had given her hand to a noble-hearted American gentleman, upon whom I looked as being worthy of my darling's choice; and as she placed one hand within his, she took the hand of her father with the other, and whispered, — 'you now give your daughter to another, yet it shall only serve to bind me still closer to my father.' I was happy then; and when two years later, I pressed my daughter to my heart, and bade her adieu, for the first time, without a thought that it might be the last, I was happy; and when I pressed a kiss on the cheek of her infant child, and grasped the hand of my noble son, her husband, I was happy; for so full was my cup of joy, that I had forgotten the drop of bitterness which I had tasted therefrom. But, alas! it was not so full to overflowing that there was not room for the draught that was to be my portion. They sailed for America, to visit his home, when, after the settlement of his estate in this Western world, they would return to make

glad their father's home; that day has not yet come! A year elapsed, and I had no tidings of them, yet I would not permit the thought to dwell with me that I should never hear from them more, and another year passed on before the despair entered my soul, which has been to me a burning flame ever since. I gave my possessions to the keeping of another, and left my native Italy, to cross the deep, if I might learn of the fate of my children. I went to the place he had told me was his home, but I met with only strangers there. I inquired for the noble vessel in which my child had sailed; she had not belonged on this coast, and thus were my earnest inquiries repulsed, day after day, with a heartless—'we can give you no information.' I travelled from place to place, in hopes to get some clue to the mystery which hung around my lost ones; but, alas, that was not to be! I sought in vain. It was then a change came over me; I hardly knew myself. I concealed my name, and lived a recluse, never disclosing to any one the history of my sorrows. But I could not live thus, and I endeavored to divert my mind from this state of frenzy, by making use of the talent, for which, in my heart of stone, I would not

thank my God for bestowing upon me! And so I have lived, as you find me,—'the unknown artist.' It is needless to add, the beautiful Madonna, which was never designed for the rude gaze of public curiosity, is the likeness of my child; and though I had no other than the impress of her features upon my heart, to guide my trembling hand, yet I have got a soul upon that canvas! Sometimes I have fancied that some good angel had not forgotten me, and had breathed *her* soul into those pure eyes!"

"And the child?" asked Natalie, in a suppressed breath, scarcely above a whisper.

"Her child was but a tiny babe; her features were not sufficiently developed to leave its memory on my mind; yet they told me the little creature was like her mother. This, the Madonna's child, is from life. In my wanderings I visited the island of Nantucket. I spent some little time there, as I found the great hearts of those people more congenial to my weary spirits, than the chilling air of avarice, which, in a measure, marks this western world. One morning, as I strolled along the shore, looking out upon the sea, depressed in spirits, I observed a pretty sight not far from me;

an old negro sat upon the beach, and by his side an infant, some eighteen months old, with her arms clasped about the neck of a large Newfoundland dog, while her eyes, which were of the blue of heaven, were fixed upon the waves which rolled and broke in harmless ripples at her feet. She was a beauteous child. I have never seen another upon whom I could look, as the little angel that had gone. I traced her beautiful features, as I was so fortunate as to have pencil and paper by me, and was about to pass on, when I observed the brother of the child approaching; he was a noble little fellow, with the air of a young prince, and I never shall forget his proud answer, when I asked him of his sister, — 'We call her Sea-flower, sir, for she came to us from God, and he smiles upon each little flower, as it lifts up its head, all trembling with dew.' I breathed a blessing upon them both, for they had drawn a tear from my heart of stone."

"Sir," said Natalie, as he paused, "Nantucket is my home; often have I listened to my dear brother, as he has told me the pretty story of the sad gentleman whom he met, when I was but an infant, and how he spoke to me so tenderly, and

sighed for his own Natalie. I had no other name then but Sea-flower, and I have been called by that name ever since; yet after that day, my Christian name was Natalie."

The artist gazed upon her, and pointing to the Madonna, exclaimed, — "Thou art the child! you are like the Madonna! Can it be that I have unconsciously restored to the mother her child? None other than her own could thus resemble her!"

"In my innermost heart there has ever dwelt a mystery, which I can find no language to describe! In my dreams I have had sweet visions of a beauteous being, who has smiled upon me, and made me happy. The Madonna awakens all those pure feelings, and I cannot but look upon her as in some way connected with my being; yet my own mother lives, and my affection for her is as for no other being upon the earth."

"*She* is in heaven," mused the artist.

At this moment the door opened, and who should enter but Clarence Delwood, who was much surprised to find Natalie thus unattended, in earnest conversation with the mysterious artist. She arose as he entered, and presented him to the

gentleman, but she had not yet learned his name. The artist presented his card to Delwood, assuming the same frigid manner which had become his nature. Delwood gave one glance at the Madonna.

"How is this, sir," asked he, in an excited manner, "that you have made use of this lady's face to attract the notice of a vulgar public to your works? Who gave you authority for such assurance as this, sir?"

"Calm yourself, Clarence," said the Sea-flower, mildly, "the gentleman had never seen me, to his knowledge, until this morning. It rather becomes us to apologize for this intrusion upon the sacred memory of his child."

Mr. Delwood listened with astonishment to the information which we have just learned, and his eyes wandered from the beautiful Madonna to the no less beautiful being, whom he hoped, at no distant day, to call his own, while a thought filled his soul with delight, and he said to himself, — "I knew that she was infinitely above me, though outward circumstances would make her of no particular distinction."

"Yes, there is a meaning in this, a mystery to

be solved. Who is she? — this pure being. And your mother still lives," mused the artist; "do you resemble her?"

"I am unlike any one of my family, so much so that strangers have noted it."

"And your father?"

"Is in heaven."

"Truly," mused the gentleman, "and your sainted mother likewise."

"Permit me to ask your address, gentle lady," said the artist, as his visitors prepared to retire.

"And in return you will allow me to come every day, and look upon this dear face?"

"You are the only person whom I have bade a welcome to my presence for years;" and bidding them a "good morning," the artist retired to brood over other than his sorrows.

It was then that Natalie remembered the poor black woman, though not a thought of the object of her own visit thither, crossed her mind. The woman was silently contemplating the Sea-flower, as if she were an angel of mercy.

"Where do you live, my good woman?" inquired Natalie.

"One spot am not my home more dan anoder,

missy; de wide earth am my home. But tell me, missy, did ole Phillis hear you straight, or am she so warped troughout, dat she not get de right comprehensions?"

"What I have told you, you may rely upon; come here in a day or two again, and you shall hear farther."

"Bress de Lor'! bress de good Lor', for sending de bright angel!" shouted the woman, as she ran out of the house, throwing about her long arms, (now freed from slavery's chains,) and making sundry other uncouth manifestations of her joy, so characteristic of her race, which caused a policeman to realize the dignity of his station, by actually opening one eye, and puffing diligently at the cloud of tobacco smoke which encircled the other.

A week later, and Natalie received a letter from her mother, in reply to her account of her visit to the mysterious artist. It ran thus:—

"My Dear Daughter,—It was with joy, mingled with a shade of sadness, that I perused your last. Not that you, my innocent child, could impart other than pleasure to the meanest of weak mortals, yet it brought afresh to my mind

a subject, which, though it marks one of the happiest moments of my life, owing to peculiar circumstances, — the memory of my dear husband being closely associated therewith, — brings to my heart, also, a shadow of grief. That which I would say has to do with yourself, my daughter, yet I cannot commission my pen to the revealing of this long-buried secret. I would tell you with my own lips, of the mystery which hangs around your birth, for I would seal the tale with a mother's kiss, looking upon my foster-child for an assurance of love undiminished. You must now come home to us. I can bear this separation no longer. The time has come when our dear little Sea-flower, for so many years the sunshine of our home, shall test the strength of her affection for those who will ever regard her — a blessing from that heavenly shore. Say to the author of the Madonna and child, that I would earnestly wish that he may accompany you home, as he may be informed of that which so nearly concerns his happiness. Adieu, my daughter, until I shall see you once more. From your affectionate mother."

Natalie folded the letter, and repeating aloud, "can I ever love my mother less?" she leaned her head upon her hand, and wept.

The day drew near when the Sea-flower,

accompanied by Mr. Alboni, (for such was the name of the gentlemanly artist,) and Clarence Delwood, should seek her island home. This was anything but a pleasant anticipation for Winnie, for since her mother's death she had learned to lean upon Natalie, though younger than herself, and had received from her in times of trial, such sweet counsel as would sink into her heart, giving her new strength, making her a wiser and a better being. In the time which Natalie had been in the Santon family, there had been a perceptible change in the character of the beautiful coquettish heiress. Those blemishes which the faithful mother had discovered, upspringing in her daughter's youthful heart, marring her otherwise lovable character, had been erased; not that she had lost in any degree that gay, cheery openness of heart which we love so well to meet, — she was yet the Winnie Santon of days which had known no lowering skies, the singing bird of a June morning, — save that an occasional plaintive note, breathed out upon youth's freshness of life's realities.

It was the last night in which these maidens, Winnie and Natalie, might pour out to each

other the fulness of their hearts. The last, did we say, the last? distance would separate them ere another sunset, and ocean would intervene; yet we have said, — the last. Folded in each other's arms, they sat in the pale moonlight, each reading within the other's soul, an appreciation of this holy hour. Holy hours are they indeed, which lead our thoughts far up beyond this mortal sphere, pointing us to other than earth's vanities. Beautiful, yet so unlike, they were; and ah, what is more beautiful than maiden purity? Woman, — she fell, yet her name will ever stand foremost in the ranks of all that is exalting.

"And who will there be to love me, when you are gone? Who will talk with me so gently, and keep my feet from the dangerous paths which surround me?" asked Winnie, as the discordant tones of Mrs. Santon's voice stole in upon their quietude, from an adjoining apartment.

"If there is anything in this beautiful world of ours which can make me sad, it is the parting from those whom I love; yet I know it is but for a little while. Dear Winnie, can you realize how kind our Father is, that he has given us the promise of a home where there will be no more part-

ing, — never a farewell? and he will guide your footsteps; make him your friend, and though all others should forsake you, you will be happy. He will be a better friend to you than ever I have been, and remember, Winnie dear, when I am gone, should sorrow come to you, or bitter trials mark your way, go to our Father for counsel, and he will give you sweet rest."

Thus did the Sea-flower endeavor to leave upon Winnie's heart that which should prepare her for meeting the trials which she but too plainly foresaw would be her lot, from the unmotherly spirit evinced by Mrs. Santon. Blessings on thee, noble girl! would there were more like thee to be found in this sinful world below! But what is a blessing craved by the lips of frail mortal, compared with the seraph blessings showered upon thy gentle head, from her who is looking down upon her child, as thy voice is raised in prayer to the God of this motherless one, that she may find refuge beneath the shadow of his wing.

The last farewell was spoken by poor Winnie, with an aching heart, Mr. Santon had pressed the Sea-flower's hand, with a tear in his eye, as if reluctant to let her go, lest the severing of one of

the last ties which bound him to happy days, should be too much for his sorrowing heart,— and she had gone, leaving her impress upon the hearts of all who had met and loved her. Her spirit was the spirit of love, forgiving as she hoped to be forgiven,— her sins, which, had it not been said of man, "not one is perfect," we should have looked upon as of no deeper stains than are of the newly washen lambs, gambolling in fresh pastures of innocence. Even to Mrs. Santon's unpardonable slight, in not giving her a parting salutation, pleading one of her timely headaches as an excuse for her non-appearance at the hour of separation,— the Sea-flower had left for her a kind farewell.

After an absence of nearly three years, Natalie stood once again upon the shores of her island home. Everything was as when she had left, for the bustle and change of the outer world does not disturb the quiet of this sea-girt isle. Her mother received her with tears of joy, that fulness of joy which only the mother can feel, who, after a long separation from the child whose beauty of character sheds a halo of honor around the household name, holds her to her heart again, where she

knows her to be safest from the world's contumely. Harry welcomed his sister home, with the wild delight of his boyish days, regardless of the presence of strangers in their family circle; while old Vingo, who had been beside himself for a week past, with the prospect of at last actually beholding his missy face to face, capered about the room, as if he were not so near his second childhood. The Sea-flower pressed his bony, black hand to her lips.

"Ah! I know dat you neber change, missy; I know you always be de same! I tells mysef dat, dese long years past, and bress de Lord, poor old Bingo hab one friend as long as he hab a hope ob libin'!"

"Yes, my good Vingo," said the Sea-flower, "you may truly rely upon one friend,—that best of friends, he will never forsake you; but," and she spread out the veritable handkerchief, so precious to the poor black woman, before his wondering eyes, "you are deserving of the rich blessings of earthly friends; for had I been tried, as it has been the will of an overruling providence that you should be, I doubt if I had borne my cross with the submissive spirit which you have mani-

fested. Tell me," added she, pointing out the crooked marks in the corner of the handkerchief, "do you recognize that?"

Vingo drew forth the bandanna, which always accompanied him in his wanderings, and laid it by the side of the other. They were just alike; there were the two crooked marks upon each, speaking as accurately as the most highly finished ambrotype of the day.

"Praise de Lord foreber!" shouted the negro; "I neber 'speck to see dat sight, while I not'ing but ole brack Bingo! I can lib to de end ob my days wid joy at de sight ob dat! it am next to finding poor Phillis hersef. Pray, missy, did you find dat in some accidental cotton bag? or am Bosting only the Christian name for wicked old Kintuck? I should n't tink dat angels could lib in dat cannibal hemisphere!"

It was with difficulty that those who witnessed the fellow's ludicrous movements, could refrain from a smile; but when, at a summons from Natalie, the door opened, and the black woman, so nearly allied to the human family as to have manifested an appreciation of the beautiful, stood before them, there was not a dry eye in the room.

It was an affecting sight, to witness the meeting of this man and wife, who had been separated for so many long years, and under such trying circumstances. To be sure, they were poor ignorant negroes, who are looked upon by a large portion of the world, as only fit to be ranked with dogs and other dumb animals: yet they have souls, hearts which had been given to Christ, and the meek and lowly Jesus, were he now upon the earth, would not be ashamed to take this down-trodden race by the hand and lift them up. God looks down from his throne above with pitying eye; he pities his children; we grow strong in the assurance of his tender mercies; but let us remember, — he will avenge with a powerful arm, the wrongs inflicted upon his feebler ones; for he hath said, — "My children, love ye one another, even as your heavenly Father loveth you."

This meeting of old Vingo and Phillis, was enough to have softened the heart of the vilest "Legree;" but probably, had one of those gentlemen, whose highly respectable occupation it is to deal in the traffic of buying and selling — man, been present, they might have been led to remark, "The silly creatures seem to imagine they have some feeling."

The evening shades descended. The night was wild, and the voices of the breakers rose loud, as if responding to the angry aspect of nature; yet peace sat beneath the roof of Mrs. Grosvenor's dwelling. The evening lamps were lit, and as Mrs. Grosvenor produced a small casket and laid it on the centre-table, she thought within herself, — it was much such a storm only a few days after our dear one came to us. Mr. Alboni sat with bowed head, as the mother proceeded to bring forth evidences which should identify her darling child as being of the descent and lineage of another line of ancestors than hers; while the Sea-flower, her hand clasped within that of him who had found favor in the mother's eyes, prepared herself to receive any information in regard to her destiny, which it should be the will of a just God to decree. The tiny lace dress, which the infant had worn, when she was first placed in her foster-mother's arms, was held up to view. It was of a costly fabric, embroidered heavily with needle-work, evidently the production of the industry of some lone sister of convent life. The casket, the contents of which had been so long treasured as things sacred was opened and the

bands of gold placed in Mr. Alboni's hands. He examined them closely; there were no initials, not the least mark whereby he might learn of that which was of such vast interest to him, when lo! he pressed the spring which had before yielded to Mrs. Grosvenor's touch, and behold! — the same features which he had looked upon day by day, for twenty years, were revealed to him, — the features of his Madonna — his child!

"My God!" exclaimed he, "I thank thee that thou hast brought me from darkness to light, not only that I may acknowledge thy supremacy, but to bless thee during the brief remainder of my days; if I may atone for my deep sin in living so long without thee, even doubting thy existence! This is truly a convincing proof that thou art all in all. I here vow, that should the gracious Lord see fit to chasten his servant, by taking away this, my last support, it shall only serve to increase my faith in the love of my most precious Redeemer!" and with tearful eyes the old gentleman held his grand-daughter to his heart.

"And is it really thus?" asked Natalie; "can it be that my mother has been looking down upon me, from her home in the skies?"

"Your sainted mother is in heaven." spake Mr. Alboni.

The Sea-flower glanced towards her from whom she had ever received a mother's tenderness; there was a smile upon her countenance, yet Natalie observed, though she would fain be happy that her loved one was restored to her kindred, undoubtedly an advantageous discovery in every point of view, it was like an arrow to her heart; for was she not her child? Natalie arose, and giving one hand to her mother, the other to him whom she would henceforth look upon as a father, she said,—"Yes, my own mother has gone to her home; she is an angel there, where I shall meet her at the last; but you, my mother, can never be less dear to me; I must always look upon you as my mother!" and throwing her arms about Mrs. Grosvenor's neck, she exclaimed, "though others shall claim me by the ties of kindred, they never shall part me from you; your child will never forsake you!"

It was enough; the widowed mother was not "written childless." Then it was that Mrs. Grosvenor related every minute particular in regard to the child's discovery, and how she had been a

blessing to them all, repaying them doubly for their care. It was a long and interesting story, to which this little circle listened, regardless of the raging elements without, with the exception of the Sea-flower, who drank in every note of nature's mighty chorus, scarcely thinking of the perils to which those who were riding at the mercy of the waves, might be exposed; for her young heart shrank not from ocean's awe; she had always looked upon an ocean grave as a hallowed place of burial.

"And your daughter's name was Natalie," remarked Mr. Delwood; "it is a singular coincidence that the child should be named for the mother."

"It is all a miracle," said Harry, "and sometimes I have thought old Vingo not far out of the way, when he declared 'Missy Sea-flower to have been left upon the beach by no other than the Lord.'"

Gradually Mr. Alboni came to be like himself again. He was a remarkably handsome man, his countenance denoting his generosity of heart. His delight in the society of the Sea-flower, as she pointed out to him each day, some new attraction

about her island home, knew no bounds. It was now that Mr. Alboni directed his attention to his unsettled affairs in Italy. Had he lived out his days as the unknown artist, without discovering an heiress to his vast estates, he would probably never have given the subject a thought, and strangers, or some public institution, would have realized a handsome legacy; but his every nerve thrilled now with new life for her; every advantage which wealth could procure would be hers. But it was not only to look after his pecuniary affairs that he laid the question before Mrs. Grosvenor, if her child should accompany him to the land of her birth, but that she might become acquainted with the position in life which she was every way capable of filling. And so it was arranged that Natalie, with her grandfather, should make the tour of the eastern world, whither Mr. Delwood should accompany them. After disposing of Mr. Alboni's estates, and visiting the lions of the East, they would return, to make America their home; and it being left for Natalie to decide what spot should be chosen as their future home, she said, stealing a glance towards Clarence Delwood, — "we will return to my

mother's peaceful island home, for we can be happy here."

Accordingly the day was fixed when they should depart, but the very evening before they would sail, brought news to Mr. Delwood of the dangerous, and probably fatal illness of his father. It was with a sad heart that he looked upon such a separation from his betrothed, for he would necessarily resign the pleasure which he had anticipated, in escorting her to countries which he had visited, and which had become dear to him. It was a great disappointment also to Natalie; yet she sought to persuade him it was for the best; "she would soon return, and the separation would bring a thrice joyful meeting."

It was a glorious evening; the soft moonlight kissed the white sea-caps, as each strove to lift its head above its fellows, as if to gaze upon night's purity, — or, mayhap, they would beckon that gentle one, who smiled upon their wild joy, as she reclined upon her lover's breast, to join them in their revellings. Upon the broad bank of the old South Shore they sat, — a favorite resort of the youth and maidens of this little island of a mid-summer's eve, — old Sankoty to the eastward,

lifting high his head, imparting a flood of radiance in pity to thousands, who watch with an intensity, to make the well-known light, rejoicing no less when they have left it far behind, for well do they realize that they have passed one of the most dangerous shoals to be found on the American coast. Behind them, distance about three miles, is the town; there is no din and bustle borne on the night air to their ears, — naught is heard but the moaning voice of the night wind, mingled with the ceaseless roar of the ocean. Here, far from the world's contumely, no eye to see, no ear to hear, save that of Him who is omnipresent, were those vows of love renewed, and registered above. Many a fair maiden has here since plighted her faith, here given her hand to the loved one of her choice, (heaven bless the union of Nantucket's fair ones!) yet the night has never since looked down upon two of more perfect oneness of heart, than those of whom this serene night bore witness.

"And will you still retain your foster-name?" asked Delwood, "or will you travel under your grandfather's Italian name? By the way, I have not heard the name of your father."

"Paul Sunderland was my father's name."

"Sunderland! the Lady Sunderland! I have seen your mother, Natalie!" exclaimed he. "It was none other than she, the kind, beautiful lady who sang to me when I was but a child, in Italy; she whom I begged to take me to that beautiful place again! Ah, it comes to me now, in no dream, but a reality; I have always thought, since I first beheld you, that I had somewhere, at some unknown time, seen a picture which was like you; but, strange, it was none other than the mother of my own dear Sea-flower!"

"And your eyes have looked upon my mother, Clarence," said she, gazing into his very soul,— "and she has smiled upon you? Oh, I shall love you with a holier love for this!" and the young girl paused and trembled, as he held her to his heart, for the thought came rushing into her soul,— "Oh, what a fearful thing is this,—this depth of fervent love!"

The morrow came; came to all of our friends who were gathered around the hearthstone of the widow Grosvenor, with joy, for genial rays, other than of a May morning's sun, were in their hearts; yet those indescribable tones, which under any

circumstances hang around the word — farewell, were gradually, unawares, jarring, jarring those gentler notes of peace, even before spoken.

"Farewell!" — the mother strained her child to her heart again, and again put her from her, to embrace her more closely. Farewell, came welling up from that proud brother's heart, with the same breath, thanking God for giving him a sister. Broken sobs measured the bitterness of the parting of those down-trodden ones, who, "by an angel of mercy," had been lifted up, to taste one drop of that bliss upon earth, which the white man holds within his power to give or withhold. Farewell! — was it not that one word, which marked the parting of those two, whose hearts had been united above? "Adieu to my island home," said the Sea-flower, and the wild waves whispered, — "we are lonely."

CHAPTER XI.

WE ARE GOING HOME.

"The sounds that fall on mortal ear
As dew-drops pure at even,
That soothe the breast, or start the tear,
Are Mother, Home, and Heaven.

"A home, that paradise below,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Where hallowed joys perennial flow,
By calm celestial bowers."

ANONYMOUS.

TIME wore heavily on with Winnie Santon, after Natalie had left them. Left as she was, much in her unnatural mother's society, who seemed to be never more pleased than when she might thwart her designs, or in some manner act so as to make those about her uncomfortable, it was not to be wondered at, if she did sigh for other days, and a confidant, to whom she might

unburden her heart. Her father spent but a small portion of his time at home; on the contrary, he rather sought to avoid the fireside, which had once been so dear to him. His feelings, whatever they might have been, were kept locked up within his own breast, yet Winnie could read the look of sympathy which he bent upon her, as he grasped her by the hand, ere he hurried away to banish painful recollections by duties "on change." When difficulties, which Natalie had foreseen, caused Winnie's heart to ache, she would school herself to meet the injustice as she knew *she* would have done; and the timely advice of the Sea-flower proved to the lone girl a valuable legacy. She had heard from Natalie, through the correspondence which for some time she had kept up with our friend Harry Grosvenor, the which letters were anticipated and perused with no common interest; indeed, her happiness, scarcely realized by herself, was closely allied therewith. Mrs. Santon looked upon these ever punctual letters, which appeared so frequently among the post-boy's morning deposits, with an evil eye, yet they did not serve to banish the schemes of her invention in regard to Mr. Montague, as a favored

competitor for the hand of the heiress; and it was his unwelcome visits, which were not unfrequent, that counted among the numerous trials which weighed more and more heavily upon her spirits. Poor Winnie! each life is made of joys and sorrows.

The death of Mr. Delwood was a deep affliction to his son, for although he was an austere man, forbidding in his manners, he had always manifested a spirit of tenderness for his only remaining relative, and Clarence now sought to dispel the loneliness which was creeping over him, by directing his attention to his father's unsettled estates, which was no light task, as Mr. Delwood had been a gentleman of great property. The life-like specimens of artistical skill, executed by Mr. Alboni, known only to Boston lovers of the fine arts as "the unknown artist," were disposed of by Clarence Delwood, in accordance with the wishes of Mr. Alboni, who, in entrusting the Madonna to his keeping until his return, placed not only the likeness of the mother before him, but it possessed him of a correct likeness of his betrothed.

The noble steamer Atlantic, after a most favor-

able passage of twelve days, carried our friends safely to the desired port of Liverpool. As Natalie stood once again upon terra firma, she could hardly credit that over three thousand miles of ocean separated her from her home, — that the same waves which washed the shores of her cherished island, broke upon the shores of this Eastern world.

Mr. Alboni was in the happiest frame of mind as they made the tour of England and Scotland, for from thence they would repair to his own loved Italy. Over the mind of the tourist, visiting the Old World for the first time, — countries where have transpired thrilling events recorded in history, what an immensity of thought and feeling sweeps! It was thus with Natalie; she could not realize that she was treading in the footsteps of royalty, who living in long past days, had held sway over this land, had looked upon this land of "merrie England" as their home. London, like a mighty Babel, rose before them, her gigantic towers telling of man's greatness, while the resplendent shining of the sun, reflected from a million turrets, proclaimed that there was one above all. St. Paul's, with its dome of grandeur,

reflecting not only honor upon her world-renowned architect, Sir Christopher Wren, but standing a living memento that Christ hath built his church upon earth.

Westminster must be visited by every stranger. As Natalie roamed over this vast structure, in itself a world of curiosity, like so many small churches roofed in by one great canopy, she lingered in the south transept, in what is called the Poet's Corner. Here are the tombs of many of the most famous poets of England. Chaucer, Edmund Spencer, Francis Beaumont, and others, have tablets here erected to their memory, while in other chapels are monuments erected in memory of sovereigns, who have long since gone to render an account of their deeds done here, to the one great Sovereign of the universe. As the eye of Natalie rested upon the tomb of the gentle Mary, Queen of Scots, the history of whose brief life, and the many cruel indignities which were heaped upon her, rushing to her memory, she stood as if riveted to the spot, when a voice near her attracted her attention, and a rough-looking old sailor, tarpaulin in hand, threw himself at her feet, exclaiming, — "Bless the memory of old

England! She is more sensible than I ever thought for. They couldn't have done a nobler thing than to have placed *her* likeness here!" and thus the jolly fellow's tongue flew, as if he would re-spin all the forecastle yarns of his lifetime, much to the discomfiture of the eagle-eyed guide, who bade the intruder begone; but our nautical friend, deigning to give this polite invitation to depart no further notice than he would have given to the juvenile whales, as they were taking first lessons in spouting of their maternal protector, the guide seized him by the shoulder, and was about to show honest Jack what virtue there was in "force of arms," when Mr. Alboni interfered, saying,— let us at least hear what the honest fellow would say for himself."

"Your honor," exclaimed Jack, whose very countenance spoke as plainly as a nose which appeared as if it had been imitating the feathered tribes, in their efforts to satisfy thirst, for so long, that its tendency had become upward in sympathy, and eyes which it were difficult to follow in the direction of both at the same time, could speak, that he who had been accustomed to guiding his bark by stars of the first magnitude, all his days,

would not now, at this age of life, be guided by this "star" of diminutive light. "Your honor," said the astonished tar, as he discovered the beautiful form before him to be actually possessed of life and breath, and was no senseless piece of statuary, "shiver my topsails, but if I did n't take the lady to be *her* representation, my name 's not John Sampson!"

"Sampson!" exclaimed Natalie, actually taking him by the hand, "Are you John Sampson?"

"I'm Sampson the world over, my lady," replied the tar, "and why should n't I be? I've come all the way from Yankee America, to visit my native dust-heap, which never produced, beside its daily growth of what might be known the other side of the water, as nature's own pie-plant and sausage-improver, but one Sampson; but," added he, in a subdued voice, "may I ask who can take enough interest in a poor fellow, who never belonged to nothing, as to speak his name? If I had not seen *her* go down with my own eyes, I should say that the noblest lady that ever lived was standing before me; but she 's gone where only her kind do go;" and the rough man drew the sleeve of his jacket across his eyes.

"I am the sister of a little sailor-boy, whom you once rescued from imminent peril, — perhaps death; and I rejoice that fortune has favored me with a sight of your honest face, that I may repay in part, at least, the debt of gratitude which we owe to you, — Harry Grosvenor, do you remember him?" asked she, placing her well-filled purse in his hand.

"Ah, that noble little specimen of young America! a young hero! — could have jumped over two Johnny Bulls, although my dust-heap happened to be this side of the water. Well do I remember him! and you are the sister that he used to talk about, till I really thought the fellow had got into a lunatic's overall?"

"Yes, I am his sister," said the Sea-flower, and she might have added, — your name has never been forgotten in my prayers; but this was no place for the illiterate, though good-hearted sailor's ludicrous expressions, and having doubly feed the guide, who did not witness a scene like this often, within these walls, which were looked upon as sacred by other than his eagle eye, our friends sought the Adelphi, whither, at Mr. Alboni's request, Sampson joined them; for there was some-

thing in the words which he had uttered, that struck upon that gentleman's ear; and yet, what it was, was not clear to his mind.

"You have spoken of some noble lady," remarked Mr. Alboni; "pray tell me if you have never met with but one whom you could distinguish by that title, in all your travels?"

"And for a very sensible reason; there never was but one like her; or, that is, I have always thought so until to-day," replied the tar, glancing toward Natalie; "for my old eyes have seen pretty much everything they have got in this little world. Ha! I should like to see the inch of land or water that my foot has n't measured."

"Let us hear a little of your history, my good fellow: begin with the beautiful lady," said Mr. Alboni, proudly contemplating his grand-daughter.

"It 's a yarn, your honor, that has n't been spun to every jack tar that 's sailed the seas, for I 've a sort of feeling about me, that her memory should n't be used to gratify common curiosity; and, sir, it 's only through the lady's sweet face, so much like *her*, that I am induced to tell the story, word for word. Ye see, it was about twenty years ago, come September, and I shipped for a voyage to

America in the De — De —, well, never mind the name; those Frenchmen always spile their crafts with a jaw-breaker of a name. Well, we had a fair time of it, till we got pretty well on to the American shores; and as for me, I never expect to enjoy myself again, as I did the first part of that voyage. We had quite a crowd of passengers, and among them was a gentleman, with his lady and child; if that was n't the handsomest couple that I ever sot eyes on, then I 've missed my reckonings! The lady, — why, your honor, it fairly dazzled my eyes to look at her! She always had a kind word for everybody; even us old tars she would talk with, as if she was n't the best lady in the world; there was n't one of us but would have gone to the mast-head feet first, to do her a favor; and as for gold, she wasted a young fortune on our ugly selves. We were within a couple o' days sail of New York, when one of those moist fogs came up, such as will make a fellow lose a whisk of his patience, if he happens to have any. Well, we kept on, as we thought, in the same course, for about twelve hours, when, like a clap of thunder, we struck fast upon a rock! It was as calm as any day I ever saw, but our

sails were all set, and that with the run of the sea, gave us no small shock; but our captain hoped we might not have received any serious damages, and set the carpenters to work to find what our situation was. Well, your honor, it was n't ten minutes after we struck, afore we began to settle down. I knew I 'd sailed the ocean longer than our captain, and when I found that we were going down, I ran below, and found the gentleman and his lady, and told them just how matters stood with us, and offered to stand by them till the last; for we had but two boats aboard, and I knew there 'd be a scene. When the lady heard this, she turned to her husband, and said,—'I am prepared to share whatever is to be your fate, Paul; but God in mercy save our child!" We went aloft to the hurricane deck, and such a sight I have never seen since! every man, woman, and child that we met there, was looking for something, if no more than a straw, to save themselves. We had now settled down even with the water, when I, 'spying a large trough floating near, made for it, and the gentleman taking the babe from its mother's arms, spread a few clothes in it, and lashed the little thing into this curious

looking craft; both gave it one last kiss, and it was launched on the wide ocean. At this instant the lady drew from her pocket a roll of parchment, and handing it to me, said, — 'You may be saved; if you ever hear from my child again, put this into safe hands for her; but if you should never hear of her, keep it for yourself, and may God be with us all.' At that moment we were carried down, and as I rose again, I caught at a spar which was floating near, and looking after my friends, I saw them rise far to leeward; they were still clasped in each other's arms. I would willingly have gone down if she might have been saved; but that could not be, and I was borne far out to sea. The fog lifted, but I was not able to make my whereabouts, and in this condition I was left for two days, when I was picked up by a vessel bound to Liverpool direct. I told the captain my story, and found that we had missed our bearings, that our vessel had been wrecked upon the Nantucket shoals. Our voyage proved to be a long and stormy one, for the September gales took us on to the coast of Africa; and when a year after I shipped for New York, I heard nothing of the child, and have always supposed her little bark took her to a better land."

"And so it did!" exclaimed the weeping Natalie, holding the great rough hand of the tar within her own; "the little bark bore her in safety to a peaceful shore, where she was received with open arms by those who have filled the place of her natural parents. You see before you, my honest friend, no other than the child of that gentle mother, whose parting from her babe you witnessed."

Sampson gazed upon her with astonishment, and clapping both hands to his head, as if to assure himself that his exterior was yet in a healthful condition, whatever transmogrification the interior might have undergone, he exclaimed,—"I'm not so sure, after all, that my name's Sampson! I really begin to think that I must have gone down with the rest; and yet, I could swear to it that I'm a portion of that dust-heap! If my topsails are n't shivered this time; clean gone by the board!" and as if to verify his words, he sank deeper into his chair, and broke into such a train of musing, as caused the little son of Africa in attendance, to jingle his glasses right merrily, that the wild bursts of his uncontrollable mirth might sound the less.

Mr. Alboni could scarce credit what he had heard. "And the parchment," inquired he, "what was the purport of that?"

The tar sat as one in a trance, but by certain gesticulations, it appeared that his skysails were not so shattered that he did not comprehend the drift of the question, and after much tugging and pulling at an old waistcoat, which was worn beneath the round-about, he produced a roll, which, from twenty years' wear, it having been his constant companion during that time, by sea and by land, had become in appearance of an uncertain nature, and handing it to the gentleman, he said, after examining the miniature which Natalie put into his hand, of her mother, "The document belongs to her, and if I'd a happened to have met her on the sea, I might have known it, even if I had n't seen the picture of the noble lady, for she 's the exact imitation; but I never can get the land fog out of my eyes when I 'm ashore. That 's a sorry looking bit of paper, your honor, but it 's what 'll buy more than one twist of pig-tail."

Mr. Alboni perused the document. He was astounded! — not so much at the contents of that soiled bit of parchment, which was the instrument

by which Natalie, or the holder, could come into possession of a handsome fortune; but it was at the honesty of this whole-souled sailor. Was it possible that this poor fellow, who gained his bread by dint of hard labor, having a fortune within his grasp, which he conscientiously could have called his own, had not disturbed a farthing thereof? — choosing rather to reap the fruits of his own industry, treasuring this rich legacy, as sacred to the memory of a friend.

Is there indeed such honor to be found in the breast of fallen man? Aye, 't is the heart of the noble sailor that beats with a heroism like this! To him who goeth down to the great waters in ships, such honor is due!

"And you have had this in your possession for more than twenty years," said Mr. Alboni, "and yet have never helped yourself to a cent of that which was rightly your own? Pray tell me, how would you have disposed of this wealth at last, had you never heard of an heiress to the estate?"

"D' ye see, sir, I have n't travelled this world over so many times, without making a beacon light occasionally. Now there 's a difference in light-houses, yer honor. There 's the revolving

light, and many other kinds of light, but the brightest of all is that steady light which shines into the darkness of the poor sailor's soul. I first made that light, sir, at the Seamen's Home, in New York, and it was there I made up my mind that I would lend this money to the Lord, for I was convinced that that would be the most profitable investment; and I've been thinking of it more and more, for these last few days, if I had n't better settle this on the Home, for you know these iron frames will give out after a while; men do n't live to see nine hundred years nowadays, though I'm named after the strongest fellow that ever handled a harpoon."

Mr. Alboni read the document to his granddaughter, the effect of which was, that certain sums of specie, deposited in the bank of ——, by the Honorable Paul Sunderland, could by the bearer of this instrument, be withdrawn at sight.

Sampson's tongue was still flying with rapidity, as if his auditors had not been void of a number, while Mr. Alboni and Natalie were holding a consultation aside.

"You are right, my child; you will never miss this from the wealth, which I thank God I have

it in my power to place in your hands Let it be as you say, — divide this sum between your protectors."

"I thank you, my dear, generous father," said Natalie, imprinting a kiss upon the cheek of her relative; "you have made me happy. I will send this most acceptable gift to my dear mother, not paining her feelings with the thought that I would seek to repay her love for her child with gold, but as an expression of her daughter's filial affection; and not only will I reward this honest man with the half of this sum, but he shall have the pleasure of presenting with his own hand this offering to my mother."

To this latter proposition Sampson acquiesced with pleasure; he was delighted with the prospect of once more seeing his young shipmate, whose mysterious allusions to the Sea-flower he could now comprehend; but as to himself receiving so liberal a legacy, he was not prepared to look upon the proposition as favorably.

"Take it, my good fellow," said Mr. Alboni, "it is rightly your own; and should you ever have anything to spare, you cannot do better than to make the investment which you had purposed."

They parted, — the honest tar to take his way to Columbia's happy land, while Mr. Alboni and the Sea-flower would prolong their visit for a little here, then depart to feast their eyes upon Italian skies. Sampson looked long after the gentle form of the Sea-flower, as he left them, for when might he see so fair a sight again?

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"And this was the home of my mother," mused Natalie, as arrived in Florence, our tourists entered the arched gateway, which led to the broad domains of the long absent master, just as the sun was sinking to rest, his soft lingering rays kissing the fleecy clouds, o'er which a blush came and went, now deepening as the rose carmine, giving place to the most delicate tinge that e'er sat upon a maiden's cheek, — born of pure modesty. The scent of the delicate jasmine perfumed the air, while the pensive strains of some fair one, soft and clear as the tones of a wind-harp, was borne on the stillness of evening to the ear of the lovely Sea-flower, who, reclining upon the bosom of her father, her sunny tresses mingling with the silvery locks, which told that he had seen many winters, whispered in words low and musical, — "My

angel mother, — I can feel her presence near; she has breathed this blissful air; can it be more heavenly there?" With her eyes still upturned, as if their mildness might pierce the veil of azure, her lips moved, as they had ofttimes done before, in praise and thanksgiving for the wondrous beauty which our Father, in his boundless love, hath set before his children. As Mr. Alboni gazed upon each familiar object, surrounding his beautiful villa, he was greatly surprised to find everything in the same state of preservation as when he had last beheld his home, once so dear; instead of an air of desolation, everything falling to decay, as would be a natural consequence attendant upon the long absence of the family, the scrupulous care and attention of some interested one, was apparent on all sides. Even the little ivied bower, which Mr. Sunderland had arranged with his own hands, when he first smiled upon his beautiful bride, was still in existence; and here did Natalie dream away many a happy hour, during her stay in dear Florence.

The old man and his frugal wife, to whose keeping the premises had been entrusted, and who occupied a small tenement upon the grounds,

could not have been more surprised if one had appeared to them from the dead, than were they when Mr. Alboni stood in the door of their cottage.

"I told you his honor would come again!" said the woman, turning to her husband; "but I was really afeared it might n't be in our time; and as we 've no one to leave in our shoes, I 'm of the 'pinion that the place would 've dropped off to some stranger."

"Ha, yes," replied the husband, "my old woman 's never far out o' the way, though she does sometimes talk as if she expected to become extinguished; but for all that, she 's equal to two common ones. But I 'm particularly glad you 've come home, on a good many 'counts, for if the place must go into any other hands than an Alboni, I 'm not over anxious to witness the change in the coat of arms."

Mr. Alboni received this compliment as it was intended, and as one motive in visiting his native land again was to dispose of this estate, he now directed his attention to the future comfort of this most worthy couple; for the domestics who had served in the family of Alboni, must not suffer

from want. Accordingly a comfortable cottage, adjoining these lands, was obtained for their use, and an annual income, sufficient to supply their wants, settled upon them for life; and so with the estate of the Albonis, whose last representative of the name would soon depart, for a memorial of days past, this aged couple hoped to spend in contentment the residue of their days.

Amid all the splendor and gayety of fashionable life in Italy, the Sea-flower was never so happy as when seated in the ivy bower, which looked out upon a little lake, the same which had been her mother's favorite place of retreat, where she might watch the ever-changing face of the mellow skies, or roaming through those ancient halls, she might feast her eyes on the many antique surroundings; but most of all, she loved to linger in the great reception hall, whose walls were hung with the portraits of her mother's family, for many past generations. Some of those countenances denoted men of much strength of character, amounting almost to a fierceness, but in nearly every female face Natalie discerned that same gentleness of spirit, which, unknown to herself, was the expression of her own spiritual counten-

ance. Beneath the portrait of the last Mrs. Alboni was a place reserved for that of her child, — the Lady Sunderland; but by some circumstance it had never been placed there. During the period of our heroine's stay in Italy, she spent much of her time in the home of her ancestors, to which she became greatly attached; but once having been introduced to an admiring Italian assembly, it was no easy matter to remain in seclusion. This new star, so mild, yet brilliant, was the theme of present conversation. She never appeared in public, but the blessings of high and low marked her way; and as she knelt in public worship, meekly bowing at the name of Christ, there was not one who looked upon her, but this passage of Scripture was brought to their minds, — "If the righteous scarcely are saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

But all times come to an end; passing away, is written upon everything pertaining to earth; and the time when our friends should return to their island home, drew near.

It was the day before they would bid adieu to pleasant scenes here, to journey to Liverpool, for business led Mr. Alboni to sail for America from

that port. The sun had gone down, — the last sunset which the Sea-flower would look upon here, — the last sunset! Pause, dear reader, — when will that same sun set to us for the last time? It may be soon, it may be later; yet it is the same, for all time is present with God. The evening shades began to claim their reign, regardless of the smiles and entreaties of lingering day, that he would delay his approach, — fit symbol of sunny youth, who would banish from his presence death's unrelenting grasp. And yet, who does not love night with earnest tenderness? and has no one a smile for death?

Natalie still lingered beneath the ivy trellis, her feet drawn upon the cushions, for she would not crush the gentle flowers, which told to her their love in the rich perfume of the air; and yet, if trodden under foot, the flowers, with their dying breath, the beauteous flowers, do, with their richest perfume, breathe forgiveness.

Her eye was fixed upon the lake, — its glassy ripples a striking contrast to the giant waves upon which she had ever looked with delight. Ah, who may divine her thoughts, as she muses thus? A faint smile plays with the dimples around her

mouth, and but for the words she whispers, one might indeed think her intent upon the ripples which kiss the shore at her feet; but no, she is transported to where the breaker's roar is heard, and a proud, noble form she sees, — his piercing eye bent upon the sea. Full well she knows for whom his heart thus wildly beats; "dear, good Clarence," she whispers, and starting from her revery, she kneels in prayer. "My Father, God, thou art merciful unto the weakest of thy frail ones, keep thou my heart to thee alone; may I have no other gods before thee; cast out all idols, if any there be, and breathe thy spirit within my soul; and may thy will be done."

"Amen," was the response of bright ones, of upper spheres, and may we receive strength to say, — "Thy will be done."

"Adieu, dear home of my childhood," spake Mr. Alboni, as the dim outlines of the land of his nativity at last faded in the distance; and burying his face in his hands, he gave himself up to his own reflections, from which Natalie would not recall him.

Arrived in Liverpool, the steamer in which they were to have embarked had sailed; consequently

a few more days were added to their sojourn there; but when at length their proud steamer left her pier, accompanied by many heartfelt good wishes that she might be attended with all success, that her voyage might prove most favorable, the Sea-flower wept tears of delight, that she might once more listen to those voices of the deep; and calmly gazing upon the countenance of Mr. Alboni, she said, —

"Father, we are going home."

Her words fell upon the ear of an officer of the ship, a gentleman of that nobleness of soul which alone constitutes a true man; one whose kind and gentlemanly consideration of the comfort and pleasure of those who have, from time to time, crossed that three thousand miles of ocean which separates Liverpool from New York, have before been publicly mentioned, and will long be remembered by those who have before come under his guidance. "We are going home," — the officer raised his hat as he passed the Sea-flower, involuntarily repeating her words, — words which many times have been idly spoken, but how full of meaning.

As that gallant steamship made her way over

the rolling billows, like "a thing of life," as if indeed she recognized the course o'er which she had so many times borne aloft her proud head, in seasons of tempest as well as of sunshine, there was not one who walked her decks, but looked upon her gigantic form as an ark of safety, rather than the frail plank which only separated not far from three hundred immortal beings from an ocean grave. Several days' sail left "merrie England" far behind, and as they drew nearer the American shores, many an eye was deluded with the belief that it had been the successful one, in being the first to make the outline of the nearest shore of this land of the free. There was the eye of youth, lit up with the light of innocence, which when riper years should have left their impress, might have given place to more of guile; while hand in hand, along her peaceful decks, roamed old age and infancy, alike joyous in the air of cheerfulness which reigned with all around.

It was near the hour of mid-day, weather favorable, with the exception of a fog which had suddenly sprung up. Occasionally the signal bell sounded, that if any vessel were in their neighborhood, she might know of their whereabouts. The

fog as suddenly lifted as it had shut in upon them, but to close down again heavier than before. Natalie had not, as most of the ladies, gone below, but stood, intent upon those new thoughts which the veil of fog, which had shut out all sight and sound, save an occasional tone of the bell, had inspired, when, — a crash, which shook their vessel from stem to stern, caused every one to look upon the countenance of his fellow, there to read the words which he had no power to utter. A propeller was at that instant seen moving athwart their bows, and from the severity of the shock, it was thought that the smaller vessel must have sustained serious damage. Accordingly a boat was lowered from the steamer, under command of the first officer, to render the unfortunates such assistance as was in their power, believing their own damages to be but slight; but the boat had not been long gone, when word was passed to their captain that they were in a sinking condition. Upon examination it was found that a large breakage had been made, directly under their bows, and the sea was rushing in terrifically.

All was now a scene of confusion; some applied themselves diligently to the pumps, and

others sought to diminish the leak by stretching a sail across the gap, while the passengers hurried, some one way, and some another, as if in a state of frenzy. To seek assistance from the propeller, even if she might not be in as disastrous a condition as themselves, was out of the question; for both vessels being under full headway at the moment of the collision, she was now again enveloped in fog. Oh, God! must it be thus? no escape for these three hundred beings? What an awful moment of suspense! Still the steamer settles down; what is done must be done speedily. The captain is without his first officer, with whom he might consult, his absence necessarily detracting from the number of boats; but had the boats been suffered to remain unmolested, for the benefit of the passengers, it were doubtful if they could have contained so large a number. Where now are those gladsome little children, those aged men and women, who, listening to those voices of childhood, would fain have believed themselves young again? Ah! where are they? Wringing their hands in wild despair! clambering over the sides of the ship, endeavoring to save themselves on rafts, spars, or articles affording inferior protection.

The Sea-flower, — where is she? where is her aged protector? Upon the deck of that ill-fated steamer the Sea-flower kneels, with eyes meekly turned heavenward. She asks that peace may be shed upon the hearts of that agonized throng; that they may fitly receive this will of divine dispensation. Never was her countenance more serene. Just then a voice was heard at her side, — "we are going home;" it was the voice of the noble officer, who had before noted her words.

"I was happy," replied Natalie, "when I said we are going home, but I did not realize we would so soon meet the loved ones in that celestial home, where we shall part no more forever; and I am happy now; yet this terrible cry of anguish incites my deep, deep sympathies."

"Thank God for this presence of an angel, to shed light over my last hour!" said the officer; "I now go down through that dark valley of death, unattended by that gloom which had seized upon my soul. My God, in mercy wilt thou sustain my wife and children, when they shall look for my coming, and I shall never return to them more! and may they soon meet me there." (He knew not that the youngling of his flock would

so soon join him in singing the songs of the redeemed.)

He said no more; they were going down; a life-preserver was in his hands, which he would have secured about the Sea-flower, but she waved her hand to him, saying, — "Take it to yourself. Farewell."

Supported by her grand-parent's arm, she gazed upon the waters; they were not angry. Peacefully sighing, they met her touch, as if they would welcome her home. "Mother," she breathed, with her last of mortal breath; — was it a farewell to that loved one of earth, or did she joyfully greet her sainted mother, who awaited the coming of her child to her home in the skies, where "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes?"

The blue waves rolled on, in their untiring way, and the sun went calmly down upon this day, — the twenty-seventh of September, eighteen hundred and fifty-four, — a day long to be remembered, both in the Eastern and Western world, for in it was the sundering of many mortal ties.

Many a family circle wept as they looked upon the familiar places, which would know their lost ones no more; but ah, chide me not, kind reader, in thus leading you adown to the coldness of death, in setting before you that which causes your tender heart to shudder. Mourn not for these departed; for would we not wish to meet them there, when, ere long, this mortal shall have put on immortality? Grieve not because that gentle one has passed away! say not that she met with an untimely end, when in her summer of life all was pleasantness before her. Think of her not as one gone far away, never to be on earth more; east her not from your heart, where, during her little day here, in innocence she entwined herself within its recesses. Oh, no, for she is nearer to us now; she is not dead, but has passed from death to life; and may her memory remain with us, in freshness as the ivy green, which loves best the churchyard's place of holy quietude,— and by her influence may we in spirit come to be more Christ-like.

CHAPTER XII.

ALONE.

"Shall I not listen to the sea-shell's moaning,
That strangely vibrates like the swelling sea,
And fancy it an echoed storm, intoning
A solemn dirge in memory of thee?"

MISS MARY M. CHASE.

A LONE man walks the shores of Nantucket; his noble form is slightly bent, and with the raven of his hair is blended the faintest tinge of gray, though he is evidently a man to whom the meridian of life is yet far in the distance; his fine countenance is sad, yet as he gazes far out o'er the sea, deep in his piercing eye is a subdued look of resignation, shedding light over his features, which a stranger might attribute to a mind of happiness; and yet that look of sadness is oftenest triumphant, leading those who meet him for the first time to ask from whence he came, for his coun-

tenance betrays that his has been not the common lot of man. Ah, who is he, — on whom young men and maidens look with pitying eye? to whom the old man lifts his hat, and little children cease from their sports as he passes, and quietly slip the innocent daisy, or the sweet-scented arbutus into his hand, which they have culled from the wide commons, where, they have been told, the good Sea-flower loved to stray.

It is Clarence Delwood! his has been a bitter, bitter draught; yet its dregs have in a measure lost their power, for he has learned that 't is his Father holds the cup. Little did he think, as they sat together there on that high bank, which overlooks the sea, upon that last evening spent with his cherished one in her island home, that it was to be the last forever! that her voice would no more be heard in glad response to nature's shouts of joyousness. Yet, as alone he sits beneath the silent night, there where she last told to him her love, he fancies that the stars in pity smile upon him, and as one more gentle than the rest, leaves its place in the heavens and slowly descends, drawing nearer and nearer, finally resting upon the bosom of ocean, — he listens, for the music of

her harp strikes upon his soul, and in the crested billows which play at his feet, a shining form he sees, her robe all sparkling with the pearly drops of the sea. He would fain go to her, as she smiles upon him, as was ever her wont, but a voice he hears, saying, "not yet," and the bright one recedes from his view.

Reader, you may visit Nantucket's sea-girt isle, you may walk those peaceful shores where she loved to roam; you may meet there that lone man on the shore; you will approach him with feelings of deep regard, not unlike reverence; but do not hesitate to inquire of him for the grave of the Sea-flower. With eyes fixed upon the ocean's blue, pointing with his finger heavenward, he will direct you to a grassy mound, at whose head is a weeping willow, upon the broad trunk of which is wrought in letters of pearl, — "The Sea-flower awaits for thee." With a tear you turn away, with the resolve in your heart that you will henceforth so live, as that when this mortal life is ended, you may "attain everlasting joy and felicity, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

You will seek the fireside of the widow Grosvenor, where from a mother's lips, you will be as-

sured of the blessings which accompany a dutiful child. That fireside is not desolate, for the members of the household have been led to say,— "Thy will, O Lord, not mine, be done." Mrs. Grosvenor, though somewhat advanced in life, still retains that peculiar freshness of her earlier days; and as she proudly glances upon the young man by her side, calling him "my son," you can hardly recognize in his athletic form the little sailor-boy of other days; yet it is none other, although he has arrived to the dignity of captain, and as Sampson prophesied, a smarter man never sailed the ocean. But who is this witching beauty at his side, who would fain impress you with a belief that that mischief which will not remain concealed for the briefest period, is not her entire composition? Do you not mistrust? who other than Miss Winnie Santon? she who having tired of the gallants of the wild West, or rather of their numbers, came to the wise conclusion that a city life was designed for such as she; she the coquettish heiress, who once stood very much in doubt as to the state of civilization among these "poor fishermen."

Yes, it is our Winnie, and she is now the wife

of Capt. Harry Grosvenor. And is she happy in this her choice? Ask her if she would exchange her brave husband for one of those superfine nicеties, who suing for favor at her feet, had at the same time lined their vows of love and constancy with the yellow dust, which had they known the strong chest to have been at their backs, while in this humble posture, it were uncertain to which might have been made an apology,—the fair lady or her dowry.

But what is the cause of that little commotion among sundry flowered blankets, juvenile counterpanes, etc., etc., which you have but this moment discovered in a neighboring niche? Is it old Nep who has ensconced himself in this dainty little nest? No, for you left him sleeping under the shade of the weeping willow. Surely, those seven kits, with fourteen blue eyes, have not lived to this green old age! Ah, the mystery is solved, by the presence of a tiny hand, which elevates itself above the little heap of whiteness, and a smiling baby face has contrived to work its way into the no less smiling sunlight, the which baby must not partake of too freely; consequently the owner of said property appears, to alleviate the diffi-

culty, which is done by giving miss baby a toss into mid-air, and with a ringing laugh, not unlike those wild bursts of merriment which were wont to be heard reverberating through the halls of Santon Mansion.

Yes, it is Winnie's child; and she tells you, while a more thoughtful look sits upon her countenance, that the name of the little one is "Natalie;" although she adds, "as earnestly as I love my child, I know there can never be another like *her*,"—and pointing to a portrait, draped in white, she presses her child more closely to her heart.

You look long and earnestly upon that countenance of the Madonna,—the one face representing mother and child. The portrait is the property of Clarence Delwood, he who is now known as 'the lone man of the shore;' and while you are yet gazing upon it, he enters, and pressing his lips to the canvas, he takes a bible from the case and reads. You accidentally observe the fly-leaf, upon which is written,—"To the Sea-flower, from her mother, on her second birthday;" and as he reads a smile lights up his countenance, for it is there written,—"thou shalt labor unto the

Lord," and a more cheerful expression is his; for it is through his ready pen that the alms chest of the poor receives its liberal supplies.

Ere you depart, you inquire as to the fate of Mr. Sampson, learning that through his agency the widow Grosvenor has come in possession of a handsome fortune,—the daughter's gift to her mother,—so that now she is enabled to make comfortable many a cheerless fireside, where poverty, through the loss of a husband and father, as he went down to do business on the great deep, had reigned. Honest Mr. Sampson, after so many years spent upon the ocean, has concluded to live the remainder of his days on shore; and in the darkest night, when the hurricane roars, and the waves break high, the brilliant light entrusted to his care, may be seen for many miles around, by the voyager who may be sailing in the neighborhood of old Nantucket. Capt. Harry Grosvenor has also bade adieu to his much-loved home on the sea; for together with Winnie's entreaties, and the goodly amount of wealth, which she declares as rightly belonging to her husband as to herself, he has been induced to give his

little wife the promise that he will sail the seas no more.

But there is one, who is no unimportant member of this happy family, for whom you have forgotten to inquire, so intent are you, as you pass out from them into the silent night, upon what you have seen and heard; but you are minded of this negligence by a voice near, and a negro, tottering from beneath the weight of years, whom you recognize at once as old Vingo, stands before you. His mind is much impaired, for he has attained his second childhood; yet from his disconnected remarks, it is evident that he still retains a pleasant remembrance of the past.

"Old Bingo neber want noting more," he replies to your question of what you can do for him; "nobody neber can do noting more for Bingo; for Missy Sea-flower hab gib Bingo, Phillis, and gib him Heaben, and what more does he want?"

"And where is your mistress's home?" you ask.

"Dar," said the negro, pointing to the skies, "dar is Heaben, dar am my missus's home; and dat is whar she tell me dat she wait for me if she

go home first. If it had n't been missy dat tole me, I could n't beliebe dat such an ole brack fellow like me, go to dat white place; but I beliebes it now, for since missy gone home I 's seen a new star up dar; and I knows it am her, for did n't she say she look down to me, jus' like ole Massa Grobener and dat poor brack Injin look down upon her! Yes, I know dat I shall meet her dar, and what am better, Phillis am going dar too! only sometimes she get skeered like, when she remember what her ole cotton massa tell her; for he tells her dat de hounds go to dat bright place, afore good for notin' niggar like her get dar; and she 's afeared dey remember dar ole habits and hunt her up, for she run away from her ole massa, and gets sabed in dese free states, whar de folks do n't mistake poor niggar for someting else dan a man."

"Farewell, faithful Vingo, and may the remainder of your days shed peace along your way. Thy portion here has not indeed been to sit in "kings' courts," yet thou hast so used the one talent lent unto thee, that at the last, when every "island shall have fled away, and the mountains shall not be found," thou shalt have a place at

the right hand of that glorious throne, whose king is our God; thou shalt hear those blessed words,—"well done, good and faithful servant,' and the morning star shalt be thine; and there thou shalt again find that pure gem, who, in her little day on earth, led thee to the bright river of life, where thou hast sought and found that "pearl of great price."

The blue waves have not yet tired of their unceasing sports; they still chase each other in mad glee from far over the sea, each striving to out-do his fellows, as they come tumbling in with deep-toned voices. The beaming beacon still keeps vigil over Nantucket's peaceful slumberers, while her little ones, in their gladsome dreams of childhood, wander up and down those shores, intent upon their search for the most delicate sea-mosses, exclaiming with each new found treasure,—"See! I have found a *gem* among the sea-weeds."

Gentle reader, you are weary, and I will here seek to bid you adieu, with many thanks for your kind attention; and great is my joy, if haply any have been impressed in spirit with that meek and holy submission which shall lead

them to say, — " Thy will, O Lord, not mine, be done;" and when loved ones shall be borne away from us, may we take up our cross with renewed love for Him who gave, and hath taken away, — and say, "blessed be the name of the Lord," forever.

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